

Bridge House School

C/O Cambian Education, 4th Floor Waterfront, Chancellors Road, London W6 9RU

Inspection dates

27–29 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school meets all regulatory requirements of the independent school standards.
- The Cambian Group and its regional education lead for the North West ensure that staff in the school are well equipped to support and teach pupils who have suffered significant trauma.
- The new lead teacher has quickly created a cohesive team since his arrival in January. However, he has not been able to put in place all the improvements to the curriculum and management of the school that he envisages, due to a full teaching commitment.
- The broad and balanced curriculum includes a large variety of extra-curricular activities. Its focus on developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils respect the views of others, whatever their background. The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. However, the pupils do not have opportunities to learn practical science.
- Support for pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties is outstanding. All staff are exceptionally well trained so that they are able to create a calm learning environment in which pupils can make good progress.
- All teaching staff have good subject knowledge, and plan activities for pupils that provide individual learning opportunities. However, teachers do not put enough emphasis on mathematical reasoning, editing and improving work in English lessons or the development of vocabulary across the curriculum.
- Assessment procedures ensure that teachers are able to plan appropriate work for pupils. However, assessment does not always lead to the most able pupils being given sufficient challenge.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school. Staff make safeguarding of pupils a priority so that pupils feel safe at all times in school. This security contributes to the growing confidence that pupils show in their learning and relationships.
- Pupils are respectful and courteous. Most attend school regularly.
- Pupils make good progress. As a result, they all leave the school with appropriate qualifications and move on to meaningful destinations in either further education or work.

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.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - pupils are able to apply their mathematical reasoning skills
 - pupils learn to edit and improve their own writing
 - pupils learn to use increasingly sophisticated language and technical vocabulary when speaking and writing in all subject areas
 - pupils have access to practical science learning
 - teachers' assessment leads to appropriate challenge for the most able pupils.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - improving the consistency of monitoring systems to maintain high-quality teaching and assessment in all areas of the curriculum
 - ensuring that the lead teacher is given sufficient time to enable him to address issues and to make improvements.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school meets all of the independent school standards.
- The school has no website. The school safeguarding policy is available on request to parents and carers.
- Leaders have created a clear ethos that inspires pupils to succeed in education and in their lives. It is based on high expectations.
- Strong leadership from the Cambian Group, the regional education lead for the North West, the regional special educational needs coordinator and the lead teacher has a significant impact on the progress pupils make. The leadership team supports all staff with their own targets for improvement.
- Staff morale is high. Relationships at all levels are very good. Those who completed the staff survey indicated that they enjoy working at the school. An instructor, who has a significant amount of teaching responsibility, has found the work in this school so rewarding that she is now embarking on a teacher training programme, with the lead teacher as her mentor.
- The school keeps excellent records of all pupils and their special educational needs. There are good relationships with outside agencies. Records of each pupil's behaviour and additional special needs are thorough and provide a reliable basis for discussing their academic and social progress.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a broad and balanced programme of activities, including creative and artistic subjects. Outdoor learning has a significant impact on pupils' confidence. One pupil said: 'I have got so much out of it. I have so much motivation. My confidence has gone through the roof.' A careers guidance programme ensures that all pupils raise their aspirations in terms of further and higher education. Carefully planned and monitored work-experience placements enhance pupils' experiences of the world of work.
- Leaders have put in place assessment procedures to ensure that pupils' progress is effectively monitored and recorded. Teaching plans ensure that the individual needs of pupils are generally well catered for. However, teachers do not always ensure that the most able pupils are challenged with hard enough work. Leaders' monitoring has not been rigorous enough to ensure that this happens.
- Morning tutorials, led by the lead teacher, have a significant impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The principle of equality of opportunity is evident throughout lessons. The school promotes well the British values of tolerance and respect. Pupils come from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Discrimination is not tolerated and is explored in hate crime and anti-bullying in-house workshops.

- The new lead teacher has had a significant impact on building close relationships with

pupils' parents and carers. Excellent systems for the daily handover of pupils at the beginning and end of the day ensure that the safety and welfare of pupils are maintained at all times. A new teacher has recently been employed which will enable the lead teacher to have more time out of the classroom to spend on addressing issues and making improvements.

- Leaders have a good awareness of the school's effectiveness. Their self-evaluation is realistic and accurate.
- Leaders make effective use of the funding for pupils placed in the school by local authorities. Most of this money is spent on teaching staff.

Governance

- An effective chain of command between senior managers at the Cambian Group, regional managers and the school, ensures that all staff and pupils are well supported. The Cambian Group has ensured that staff have extremely well-designed training programmes, that the newly appointed regional managers support school leaders well and that communication between staff at different levels is effective.
- Regional staff from the Cambian Group support the school staff effectively both in teaching specific subjects such as physical education and in quality assuring the school's work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are a strength of the school. The lead teacher and staff have created a strong culture of shared responsibility for protecting pupils and this permeates all areas of the school's work. The meeting between the lead teacher and all staff at the end of every day, along with the daily handover requirements with carers, ensure that he has a very open relationship with everyone. Staff and carers have many opportunities to bring to his attention any concerns.
- The Cambian Group ensures that eight days of safeguarding induction training are given to all staff who join the school. The school does not employ supply teachers because they would not have received the same level of training. In the case of absence, staff are brought in from other Cambian schools.
- Risk assessments are in place for every pupil for their own safety and the safety of others with whom they come into contact.
- Excellent records are kept that detail safeguarding concerns. During the four years that this school has been operating, there has only been one incident of the need for physical restraint.
- The building and grounds are highly secure. All people are checked as they enter the grounds. Staff are extremely vigilant so that no adults enter the grounds without authorisation.
- The building is in good repair and regularly checked for fire risk and other safety hazards. The person responsible for health and safety makes daily checks. The premises meet all the independent school standards.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- A calm learning environment ensures that pupils feel secure and are therefore able to apply themselves to learning. Pupils told the inspector that they know that teachers want them to do well. Teachers care about pupils' personal well-being and educational progress. Relationships between adults and pupils are based on mutual respect. All of this helps pupils to become engrossed in their learning and to make good progress.
- Pupils appreciate how well staff display their work. Some pupils are only in the school for a short time but they know their work will remain long after they have left on a special wall for the work of past pupils. Consequently, pupils feel that their work is valued and that they will be remembered.
- Pupils like learning in competitive, team-game activities. They enjoy the challenge of these collaborative opportunities. The games motivate them to engage in learning and to make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy creative opportunities in the wider curriculum such as painting, tie-dye and textile design. For example, they visited an art gallery and learned about decoupage. They also enjoyed a project about nail painting. Pupils recently won a design competition organised by Cambian schools. They have many opportunities to enjoy canoeing, abseiling, orienteering and gorge walking during outdoor education. There is a netball court in the grounds that is also used for other ball games.
- Teaching assistants and instructors are fully involved in all lessons. This makes a significant positive impact on pupils' learning.
- A combination of day-to-day assessment and more formal tests supports teachers to measure pupils' progress and to plan learning opportunities. However, teachers do not always ensure that harder work for the most able pupils is set for them.
- Pupils are encouraged to read widely and they enjoy a wide variety of texts.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to plan appropriately for the individual needs of pupils. However, in mathematics, teachers do not plan tasks that enable pupils to reason mathematically. This sometimes slows pupils' progress in this subject.
- Teaching staff make good use of the resources they have to promote pupils' learning. However, pupils do not have access to laboratory resources. This limits pupils' opportunity to learn from practical science experiences.
- Pupils have sufficient chances to write at length in subjects other than English. However, a few teachers do not often require pupils to edit and improve their writing. As a result, a minority of pupils do not learn how to develop their writing skills, nor to use more sophisticated and technical vocabulary in their talk and in their writing.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The Cambian Group gives comprehensive training to all staff to ensure that they have the skills needed to de-escalate situations, and to deflect and diffuse the development of highly emotional behaviour caused by pupils' stress. All staff working in the school demonstrate these skills consistently.
- The school offers therapeutic sessions from educational psychologists for pupils. These sessions take place weekly and enable pupils to make progress in successfully dealing with their social and emotional difficulties. Some pupils choose not to take advantage of these sessions, but have close links with key workers and carers that provide alternative support.
- Pupils say that they enjoy attending this school. One pupil said: 'Initially, in other schools, I was not well behaved, but here it is so calm and nice that I have settled well.' Another pupil said: 'The school has helped me show who I really am. The school persuades you to be positive.'
- Staff assess pupils' personal and emotional development using an appropriate assessment scale. Due to the combined efforts of the clinical team of educational psychologists and the education team, pupils make outstanding progress in their personal and emotional development from their starting points.
- Staff also make daily assessments of pupils' attendance, participation, concentration, working independence and attainment. Pupils are actively involved in these assessments and subsequent target-setting. Consequently, pupils have their targets in front of them as they work and are well aware of how to improve.
- Staff are highly skilled at recognising pupils' emotions and are able to pre-empt any difficulties that might occur in lessons. If necessary, pupils are offered counselling before their emotions escalate. This vigilance results in a calm learning environment that promotes learning successfully.
- Pupils know that if they feel, for any reason, unable to continue to take part in a lesson they may remove themselves for a while. On these occasions, key workers accompany them and help them to discuss their emotions, often during a 'walk and talk' session.
- Staff regularly discuss pupils' emotional progress during group discussions. For example, during this inspection, all pupils in a morning tutorial were able to describe their progress from when they joined the school to the present day. The lead teacher led the session with all other staff supporting the pupils. It was conducted in a lively and enjoyable way, with pupils able to laugh at some of the things they had done in the past. They were able to talk in a very positive way about their hopes for the future in terms of relationships or educational aspirations.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural teaching supports pupils to develop their relationships and understanding of the local community and the wider world. They can talk about a variety of different faiths, including the similarities and the differences between them.
- The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. They learn about the law in relation to equalities, about different religions and cultures and about democracy. The lead teacher ensures that pupils learn to discuss the news and to discuss issues during the daily morning tutorials. One pupil said about voting in elections: 'You must read the manifesto. You need to know what you are voting for.' She also said: 'There are so many

different cultures. It is nice to be a part of it.'

- Pupils respect the views of others and recognise that people are all different.
- Good-quality careers advice and guidance, along with effective work experience, prepare pupils for their future lives. Work experience is used by the school to help students decide what they want to do in the future. Recently, pupils have worked at a local play barn, with The Prince's Trust and in a local school nursery.
- The success of these opportunities has led to very positive reports from those who provide work experience, with some of the pupils being offered future work from their placements. The vast majority of pupils secure places at further education institutions or employment and training when they leave the school.
- Pupils are given opportunities to learn about serving the community in a variety of fund-raising events for charities. For example, the pupils made cakes and other items for coffee mornings and summer fair raffles.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations because of the good teaching provided by the school. They know the dangers of corresponding with strangers online and know whom to go to if they ever feel unsafe. For example, during this inspection, in one morning tutorial, pupils were taught about the dangers of 'sexting'. They also know how to keep themselves and their friends safe in climbing and mountaineering situations.
- Good transition arrangements ensure that pupils moving on to new educational institutions make several visits to the new environment before taking up a place. This helps them to feel confident in the new situation.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding because of the high expectations of staff who consistently apply the school's behaviour policies. There are good relationships between all adults and pupils. Over the course of a few months, pupils improve their previous behaviour and gain emotional confidence. As a result, they now see themselves as confident learners who can pass exams.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are respectful and courteous to staff and visitors. Instructors who work with pupils outside the school say that they are exceptionally well behaved and cooperative.
- The vast majority of pupils attend school every day. A very small minority of pupils had low attendance because of a period of emotional regression. However, this has now improved and they have returned to full-time attendance.
- Pupils' books show that they take pride in their work. Pupils present their work neatly and accurately and their handwriting is neat and tidy. Pupils consistently complete the tasks to the best of their ability and act upon teachers' advice and feedback.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in a range of subjects.
- All pupils have suffered trauma before coming to the school. Nevertheless, because staff

are highly skilled in the management of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, pupils quickly settle down, feel secure and are able to enjoy their learning.

- All pupils leave the school with a range of appropriate qualifications. For example, pupils achieve functional skills qualifications or GCSEs appropriate to their starting points, needs and aspirations.
- Pupils leave the school having gained confidence from a secure environment, from many opportunities to develop their confidence in the outdoors, and from work experience.
- Pupils across all year groups who have had significant gaps in their learning make consistent improvements and progress across a range of subjects.
- The vast majority of pupils who have attended the school since 2013 have moved on to meaningful destinations in either education or work.
- Pupils' capacity for sustained reading has made significant progress over the course of a few months.

School details

Unique reference number	140227
DfE registration number	893/6032
Inspection number	10033584

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 category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	5
Number of part-time pupils	1
Proprietor	Cambian Group
Chair	Anne Marie Carrie
Lead teacher	Antony Maynard
Annual fees (day pupils)	£26,000
Telephone number	01746 860379
Website	www.cambiangroup.com
Email address	antony.maynard@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous inspection	4–6 June 2014

Information about this school

- Bridge House School was registered in September 2013. This is the school's second inspection. The Cambian Group now manages the school. The site was originally a day independent special school and has been extensively refurbished.
- The school can admit up to six pupils aged 11 to 18 years and is registered for pupils with

social and emotional difficulties. It currently has five pupils on roll aged between 14 and 16 years. Pupils usually attend for at least a year and they have a range of backgrounds and heritages including, occasionally, pupils who speak English as an additional language. All of the pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan or varied additional needs needing special educational needs support, including for reading or learning difficulties.

- Pupils have often missed considerable amounts of schooling because of the trauma they have suffered. Their starting points on entry are generally lower than their previously recorded results at schools prior to their placement at Bridge House School.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons and scrutinised a variety of pupils' books. She also held meetings with the lead teacher, Cambian Group's regional education leader and Cambian Group's regional leader for special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The inspector also met the manager of the care home adjacent to the school, one of the carers at the care home, a careers adviser and two pupils, to seek their views about school life.
- The inspector spoke on the telephone to the clinical services manager at Cambian Group, as well as the education director at Cambian Group and the regional clinical leader at Cambian Group.
- The inspector took into account two staff questionnaire responses.
- There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mary Maybank, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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