

Cambian Walnut Tree Lodge School

17 October 2017

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(h)

- The inspection in October 2016 found that standards regarding aspects of the quality of education were unmet, in relation to the standards for paragraphs 3, 3(a) and 3(d). Specifically, that teachers' subject knowledge, teachers' use of prior assessment information, the level of challenge for the most able pupils and the use of information technology (IT) were not supporting good learning and progress for pupils.
- In the school's action plan, the proprietor proposes to: review the curriculum and timetabling to ensure that it meets pupils' individual needs; use accurate baseline assessment to set appropriate targets for pupils; improve teachers' use of formative data in lessons; tailor interventions to address gaps where pupils are below age-related expectations or making insufficient progress; develop staff's understanding of social, emotional and mental health needs; adopt a robust system of assessment; improve the quality of curriculum planning; and introduce a more effective marking policy.
- Since the previous inspection, the turbulence in the leadership of the school has continued. Another new headteacher has been appointed. This headteacher identified that the school was not acting rapidly enough to attend to the issues in the quality of education in a rigorous and sustained way. She has acted quickly to try and secure better foundations in the provision for the curriculum, assessment and behaviour. However, standards of education are highly inconsistent.
- The headteacher has focused on developing the curriculum. As a result, pupils now have a more bespoke curriculum which is tailored to their abilities, including a wider range of qualifications on offer. The headteacher has ensured that detailed schemes of work are in place, which reflect the higher level of qualifications being offered to pupils, including GCSE and A levels, where appropriate. Where staff do not have the appropriate knowledge, the headteacher has bought in specialist staff or used those at other local Cambian schools to tutor pupils in specific subjects, for example GCSE history.
- However, staff are not consistently confident with teaching some aspects of the curriculum. Staff are not accessing sufficient or specific enough training to help them develop the subject knowledge and relevant skills quickly enough to have a significant

impact on their teaching. Most notably, the teaching of English and the development of pupils' literacy are not effective enough.

- The new headteacher has also implemented a more rigorous assessment system. This system uses tests to review pupils' starting points more accurately. Leaders are continuing to develop effective ways to measure pupils' social, emotional and behavioural progress, as well as their academic development.
- However, staff are not yet using assessment information consistently well, either when they plan or review pupils' learning. Equally, the marking and assessment system is not being implemented consistently by staff. As a result, expectations of what pupils can achieve remain too low, and planning does not meet the needs of pupils. Too much time is wasted during some lessons because teachers do not plan effectively to support pupils to engage quickly with their learning.
- Teachers' resources do not always stimulate pupils to want to learn more. Moreover, displays around the school are tired, unkempt or out of date. In short, the learning environment does not provide adequate stimulus or celebrate current pupils' work as effectively as it could.
- The school specialises in providing education for pupils with significant and complex social and emotional needs for set periods of time, ranging from three months to one year. The headteacher has implemented a series of strategies, such as the online behaviour system and key worker 'chat sheets', to try and support pupils to understand how to deal with difficult situations effectively. Additionally, she has provided staff with some very specific training around the needs of pupils with complex emotional needs.
- Despite these efforts, adults in the school do not have consistently high expectations for pupils' attitudes and behaviour. On occasion, pupils' poor behaviour, such as swearing, goes either unnoticed or unchecked. Moreover, adults are not using the implemented systems consistently. For example, the headteacher was unable to find evidence of the 'chat sheets' being used effectively or routinely with pupils.
- The most significant issue at the school currently is poor attendance. Despite the headteacher's efforts to engage adults who work with the pupils outside of school, current pupils, even those who have been at the school for longer periods, do not yet attend routinely.
- As a result, this standard is not met. Five additional standards are also now not met that were met at the previous inspection. Leaders acknowledge that there is still much work to do in order to meet these standards.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b)

- This standard was met in the previous inspection but was reviewed as part of this inspection.
- The school has an up-to-date safeguarding policy.
- The headteacher acts as the designated safeguarding officer, while two adults act as deputies in her absence. Together, they ensure that staff are well trained, know what to look for and report concerns appropriately.

- The school maintains effective records using its online system. Leaders are currently transferring all past handwritten administration to this system. The school also has strong links with other Cambian specialists in safeguarding. All adults work collectively to safeguard pupils through daily communication about their welfare and safety. Adults work well with external agencies to support pupils when they are in need.
- The standard remains met.

Paragraphs 16, 16(b)

- This standard was met in the previous inspection but was reviewed as part of this inspection.
- The school undertakes a wealth of risk assessments, both for individual pupils and for specific events that pupils take part in, such as the weekly physical education lessons that take place off-site.
- Although compliant, these risk assessments could, on occasion, contain slightly more specific guidance for staff around exact actions to take to ensure that they minimise risk during 'down time' on these visits.
- The standard remains met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff and proprietors

Paragraphs 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e)

Paragraphs 21(1), 21(2), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b)

- This standard was met at the previous inspection but was reviewed as part of this inspection.
- Leaders ensure that they carry out all appropriate checks on staff and trust members. Recently, the Cambian Trust has made the decision not to undertake this work centrally at head office, but to support schools to do this on-site.
- Consequently, although the trust and school were able to provide evidence that they undertake all appropriate checks, leaders acknowledge that some of the administration needs to be more formally centralised onto one single central record of checks at the school site.
- This standard remains met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraphs 32, 32(1)(c)

- This standard was met at the previous inspection but was reviewed as part of this inspection.
- The school does not have a website. However, it makes the safeguarding policy available to all relevant stakeholders, including parents and carers, upon request.
- This standard remains met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

- This standard was not met in the previous inspection. Specifically, leaders were not ensuring that pupils received a good standard of education and made good progress. In particular, school leaders were not undertaking sufficient work to monitor the quality of teaching and learning and to review the progress that pupils were making.
- In the school's action plan, the proprietor proposes to: train leaders to improve their effectiveness and accountability; implement a clear leadership strategy; create partnership links with other schools; develop quality assurance processes; and improve the IT resources.
- The headteacher has been splitting her time between two different schools in a wide geographical area. This results in difficulties in embedding consistency in the quality of teaching and behaviour management.
- The roles and responsibilities of other adults, including the lead teacher and those adults who accompany pupils to school and to lessons, are not clear. This means that the actions taken to support pupils to develop social skills and self-regulate their behaviour over time are not being consistently applied by staff. As a result, on occasion, there is a lack of clarity about which staff are responsible and accountable for different aspects of the school's work.
- The school's action plan following the previous inspection highlights that the trust's regional director will regularly check on the impact of leaders' actions. However, following the departure of the previous regional director, there has been no one in place to undertake this work. Consequently, there has been no effective quality assurance from the trust for many months.
- The headteacher has undertaken a series of learning walks, lesson observations and work scrutiny to try to improve the quality of teaching. From this information, she has created some training for staff. However, these reviews are not focusing enough on the progress that pupils are making from their varied starting points. Consequently, leaders are not challenging or supporting staff to increase their expectations of what pupils can achieve in the time that they attend the school.
- The trust's director of education and headteacher have a very good understanding of the weaknesses in the provision. They are in the process of creating greater capacity and resources for the school, both within the school and from the trust. However, it is too early to see the impact of this work.
- Leaders have invested in more computers to support pupils' learning. This is enabling more pupils to complete portfolio-based work and undertake research tasks. Additionally, classrooms now have access to whiteboards and projectors, which teachers use to help plan and execute their lessons. However, the quality of internet connection remains inconsistent.
- This standard remains unmet.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet 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 does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain unmet at this inspection

- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school:
 - enables pupils to 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
 - 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 (paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(d)).
- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school:
 - demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their roles so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently
 - actively promote the well-being of pupils (paragraphs 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)).

Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged to not be met at this inspection

- The proprietor must ensure that 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
 - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter taught
 - utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range
 - utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly (paragraphs 3, 3(b), 3(c), 3(e), 3(f), 3(h)).

School Details

Unique reference number	135990
DfE registration number	822/6014
Inspection number	10039487

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 school
School status	Independent special 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	7
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	2
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	C/o Cambian Education
Chair	Chris Strong
Headteacher	Ms Kicha Mitchell
Annual fees (day pupils)	£40,000
Telephone number	0800 138 1184
Website	www.cambiangroup.com/cambiangroup.aspx
Email address	education@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous standard inspection	4–6 October 2016

Information about this school

- Cambian Walnut Tree Lodge School is owned by the Cambian Group.
- All pupils are in the care of the local authority.
- The school provides education for pupils who have social, emotional and/or behavioural difficulties, and who are at risk of or subject to child sexual exploitation.

- A very small proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- The school occasionally uses alternative provision at Milton Keynes College.
- The headteacher supervises another school as well as Walnut Tree Lodge. A lead teacher deputises at all times when the headteacher is not present.
- At the previous inspection, the lead inspector identified that the school had not registered itself appropriately with the Department for Education so that the registration accurately represents the age and gender of pupils on-site. The school was unable to provide evidence during this visit that it had subsequently sought an amendment to its registration and that the Department for Education has agreed the specific ages and genders of the pupils on roll at the school.

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.
- The inspector observed teaching, learning and assessment in the school. The inspector also scrutinised pupils' and students' work in English, mathematics and a range of other subjects.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and lead teacher. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a director of education from the Cambian Trust.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's action plan, safeguarding records, recruitment paperwork, risk assessments, pupils' progress information and school policies and procedures.

Inspection team

Kim Pigram, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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

Parent View

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 and as part of the inspection.

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.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

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

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2017