

# Chase House School

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

## Inspection dates

7–9 November 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher and his team do a good job and pupils benefit from the care and education provided.
- Effective leadership and management has ensured that all the independent school standards continue to be met.
- Accurate assessment and an understanding of pupils' complex needs inform teaching. Teaching and support staff use what they know about pupils' lives, interests and aptitudes in order to keep them engaged in learning.
- Regular staff training means that staff know what to do in difficult situations. Conflict is managed in constructive ways and pupils get plenty of encouragement to do their best.
- Most pupils make good progress in a range of different subjects. The school could provide more opportunities for older pupils to gain useful qualifications.
- Pupils are helped to develop important life skills and to understand the difference between right and wrong.
- Attendance and punctuality at school has improved over time, although some pupils still arrive late in the mornings and miss the start of lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed with care and good humour. Staff set out firm expectations and provide bespoke support. Consequently, pupils learn how to cope with school life and grow in confidence.
- The school's attention to pupils' personal development is a key strength.
- Safeguarding procedures are thorough and pupils are kept safe at school.
- The school maintains good communication with different organisations involved with pupils' education and welfare. However, procedures for sharing educational information about pupils who move on from the school to another setting could be improved.
- The support provided by the Cambian Group has strengthened since the previous inspection. All key leaders have an informed oversight of the school's work and an accurate understanding of its current performance. They are now looking to make better use of this knowledge when planning for further school improvement.
- While all the independent school standards relating to premises are met, the building is rather cramped.

### 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 strengthen the impact of leadership and management on the quality of teaching and pupils' welfare and achievement by:
  - making sure that school improvement planning is fully informed by leaders' evaluations of the school's performance
  - speeding up procedures for sharing educational information about pupils who move on from the school to another setting
  - continuing to improve pupils' punctuality in the mornings
  - increasing opportunities for pupils to gain useful qualifications.
- Explore ways to improve the working space for pupils and staff.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher is a very positive role model who leads by example. He inspires trust from the staff and pupils and makes decisions based on the best interests of the pupils at the school. He makes his expectations clear and is a calm and constructive influence on school life and ongoing improvement. He is quick to offer praise and reassurance but will also take stern action when necessary.
- Teamwork is very strong and staff take their responsibilities seriously. Effective leadership means that there are well-organised systems for giving feedback to staff about their work and for supporting their well-being. This helps to get the best from everyone. There is good morale and pupils make good progress in their work and behaviour.
- The school curriculum meets pupils' needs. It provides sufficient time and activities for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and there is a broad range of subjects. The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education programme is a key strength and plays a significant part in preparing pupils for their lives and learning in the future. Pupils learn about the characteristics of different groups of people and their right to be treated fairly and with respect. They understand that different people believe different things and teaching pays particular attention to challenging stereotypical views and narrow-mindedness.
- There are very few opportunities for formal extra-curricular activities, although pupils and staff routinely enjoy board games at lunchtime. This is a very pleasant social time that helps to reinforce positive relationships and a sense of fair play. In addition, pupils can try their hand at gardening in the outdoor area and pupils have put on a Christmas pantomime, which was a great success.
- Everyone makes the best use of the cramped building and pupils do visit a nearby leisure centre for physical education and sport. All the independent school standards relating to premises are met. However, the current indoor and outdoor spaces are not ideal and limit the scope for further curriculum improvements.

### Governance

- There is no governing body. Instead, governance is provided by the Cambian Group and has strengthened since the previous inspection. A regional education lead, who in turn is accountable to Cambian Group's director of education, provides strategic direction and has oversight of the school's work and performance. Through his work, he has ensured that curriculum plans and other school documents are up to date and fit for purpose. By working alongside the headteacher, he is able to validate judgments about the quality of teaching and learning and ensure that all the independent school standards are met. Information gathered through self-evaluation activities is accurate but is not used to inform school improvement planning as well as it could be. Furthermore, some school improvement targets are rather woolly and do not set out clearly what needs to happen next.

### Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

- The school does not have a website, but an up-to-date, safeguarding policy that is informed by government requirements is available on request. All staff are very aware of the guidance within this policy. Records show that it is adhered to and that any concerns about adults or pupils are followed up swiftly and properly.
- The school works with a range of agencies in order to safeguard pupils and give them the help they need. Communication with local authorities, health professionals and social services, for example, is well established and well documented.
- Staff have completed 'Prevent' duty training. They are alert to local risks and pupils are taught about the dangers of extreme views.
- Unexplained absence is rare but is followed up quickly when it happens. The school's procedures for sharing information with new schools when pupils transfer from Chase House to elsewhere could be tightened up. Currently, information held by the Cambian Group is not shared quickly enough at school level, which slows the transfer of educational records.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teaching staff plan and teach interesting lessons and are skilled at building in ways to keep pupils on task. Consequently, pupils make good progress. All the independent school standards relating to teaching and assessment are met.
- Teamwork between staff is strong and is assisted by good communication between all involved with the school's work. Teaching builds carefully on what has gone before and is very mindful of pupils' emotional state. All staff have a range of strategies on hand in order to adjust their approach and explanations to suit pupils' needs and moods.
- Assessment has improved since the previous inspection and progress is tracked more carefully than used to be the case. Because pupils arrive from many different places with very different, or no, information about prior attainment and progress, the school has stuck to using an assessment system based around old national curriculum levels. The system makes sense and staff make reliable judgments about how well pupils are doing. They use this knowledge to plan for next steps in learning.
- Typically, teaching prompts pupils to think hard and often challenges them to change their views or to achieve something they thought they could not do. During this inspection, for example, pupils were learning about different religious beliefs. Teaching drew on several different approaches in order to get the best from pupils and to promote respectful and open-minded thinking. All staff are good at picking up pupils' interests in order to help them see the relevance of their lessons.
- Practical activities also play an important part. For instance, food technology lessons take place every week and staff and pupils clearly enjoy them. As they look forward to the cookery session, pupils are motivated to get their research and written preparation done in good time. When they move on to preparing and cooking food, they cooperate and concentrate while adults set out clear expectations and give good-natured encouragement.
- In most lessons, staff adopt a chatty conversational manner but do not lose sight of the learning aims. They keep pupils on track and manage all sorts of behaviour well. In all

teaching observed during this inspection, staff were calm and reassuring, showed good subject knowledge and were able to make the most of every situation. Pupils confirmed that this reflected the quality of teaching over time.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. In fact, this is a key strength.
- The school's PSHE education programme is very well put together. Curriculum plans, pupils' work and their comments during the inspection all show that the school covers a range of important and relevant topics.
- Pupils learn about the harmful effects of different forms of bullying and what to do should it happen. They also consider the problems that discrimination can cause, using topical resources to prompt their thinking about right and wrong. The 2010 Equalities Act suitably informs teaching and pupils are taught the value of respect for all.
- Teaching also helps pupils to manage everyday risks, such as when working in a kitchen. They learn how to stay safe online and the importance of making informed and responsible choices in order to stay well and safe in different situations.
- The school's focus on building pupils' emotional resilience is a hugely important aspect of its work. To this end, pupils get bespoke support with some expert input. Results vary, but overall, pupils undoubtedly benefit from the care and attention they receive.
- There is a weekly school council meeting where everyone has a say. Pupils report that adults respect their ideas and that they have seen through various plans to completion, such as organising charity fundraising events. Currently, pupils are trying to save the school piano, which has seen better days but is a treasured part of school life.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. During their time at Chase House School, pupils become increasingly self-aware and able to manage their behaviour.
- Understandably, pupils do have some challenging behaviours. Staff receive regular training in order to make sure they know what to do when pupils find it hard to cope. Consequently, they deal with difficult situations very well indeed.
- The school environment is kept clean and tidy and pupils understand the need for order and routine in classrooms. Pupils generally respond well to teachers' expectations. They say that the school's rules are fair and help everyone to stay safe and to learn.
- Attendance rates vary from one pupil to another, but in all instances attendance at school has improved over time. For the current term so far, half of the pupils on roll have 100% attendance. Punctuality presents a mixed picture. In some cases, and for a variety of reasons, pupils arrive late in the morning and miss the start of lessons, which does not help their learning.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils' levels of attainment when they first arrive at the school vary significantly and all pupils have special educational needs. In almost all cases, pupils have experienced disruptions to their education and may have been out of school for some time. Consequently, information about their achievements prior to starting at the school can be patchy. Nevertheless, whatever their starting points on entry, almost all pupils make good progress in a range of different subjects during their time at Chase House.
- The school's records and work in pupils' books show that pupils make gains in their basic numeracy and literacy skills which they are then able to apply in other subjects. Their progress in science is particularly noticeable.
- A key factor in helping pupils to make the most of lessons and learning is the skilful attention that staff give to their personal development. Staff find ways to overcome barriers to learning and help pupils to see the relevance of their studies to their lives and plans for the future.
- Careers information, advice and guidance is provided and pupils get opportunities to practise and develop life skills such as planning and preparing meals and budgeting. In recent times, pupils have found out about different jobs, such as forensic science and hairdressing, with visiting speakers giving demonstrations and answering questions. Through academic work, practical activities and the attention given to building emotional resilience and coping strategies, pupils get the support they need to prepare them for the next stage in their lives.
- School leaders have plans to offer pupils several different qualifications that will help to increase their education and employment options. Currently, the short-term or uncertain length of pupils' stay at Chase House limits their chances to gain useful qualifications during their time at the school.

## School details

Unique reference number	140273
DfE registration number	335/6002
Inspection number	10026238

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	Special school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Anne-Marie Carrie
Headteacher	Phil Petch
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,500
Telephone number	0800 1381184 or 01543 378043
Email address	<a href="mailto:phil.petch@cambiangroup.com">phil.petch@cambiangroup.com</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–12 March 2015

## Information about this school

- The school opened in November 2013. Its last full inspection was in March 2015 when overall effectiveness was judged good. A material change inspection took place in June 2015 and several independent school standards were not met. A progress monitoring inspection in September 2016 found that the school had taken successful action to ensure that the previously unmet standards were met.
- The school is located on the outskirts of Walsall in premises converted for educational use. All pupils are children looked after.
- The school caters for up to 12 girls and boys between the ages of seven and 16. The Cambian Group operates the school. The company is responsible for similar schools in different parts of the country, as well as other services.

- The current headteacher has been in post since April 2016.
- Six pupils, aged between 11 and 15 years, are on roll at the school. Most have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan associated with social, emotional and mental health difficulties. There are no pupils below or above compulsory school age.
- Pupils are usually taught in small groups with additional individual support.
- The school does not use any off-site training. Physical education takes place at a local leisure centre.
- The school's aims include 'providing a positive, safe and caring environment within which young people feel happy and secure in the process of learning'.
- The school does not have a website. Hard copies of policies and other documents are available on request.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning and met with the headteacher, staff and pupils. The inspector also met with the school's regional education lead and Cambian Group's director of education.
- The inspector examined pupils' work in books, considered assessment information and observed a school council meeting. He observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and breaktimes, during lessons and when pupils were moving about the school building.
- By the end of the inspection, there were no recent responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View). There were five responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included: the school's prospectus, information about pupils' achievement and welfare, numerous policy statements, curriculum plans, school self-evaluation and improvement plans. The inspector also checked records relating to: staff appraisal, the monitoring of teaching, premises, training, pupils' behaviour, admissions, attendance, the use of physical restraint, safety and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Martin Pye, 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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/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](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2017