

The Mews School

Wem Lane, Wem, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 5RT

Inspection dates

6–7 November 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards have been met.
- Leaders are successful at understanding the school and planning for pupils' needs. As a result, pupils make good progress across the curriculum.
- The new headteacher is effective. She has a deep commitment to the welfare and good progress of her students.
- Teachers effectively balance challenge and support for pupils. They make sure lessons are interesting and use the school's assessment policy well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils develop increasingly positive attitudes to education.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported and make good progress.
- Leaders have put in place a broad and balanced curriculum, including a range of well-planned, extra-curricular activities and a strong personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum.
- Leaders ensure that safeguarding is effective. Pupils are safe and secure.
- There are limited opportunities for reading for pleasure. Pupils' mathematical reasoning is not well developed.
- Attendance is good and rapidly improving. Pupils' punctuality at the start of the day is not yet good.

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?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - accelerating staff training in mathematical reasoning
 - extending the range of fiction books available to pupils.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by helping pupils to be more punctual at the start of the school day.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have ensured that all the independent school standards have been met.
- Pupils' education has been disrupted in the past and pupils have experienced a range of emotional trauma. Leaders have trained themselves and the staff well in how to deal with this. As a result, pupils feel safe, value their education and make good progress.
- The headteacher is particularly effective. Since her appointment this year, she has put into place good systems for planning the school's improvement. School policies are concise and helpful. The headteacher has developed a strong process for evaluating the school's strategies.
- The headteacher encourages open, honest reflection from herself and the staff. Leaders give colleagues one-to-one counselling support to build their resilience. Staff morale is high. Typical of their views was a comment in the staff questionnaire: 'Leadership is strong, and we feel able to make our own decisions and we are supported at all times.'
- The school is part of the Cambian Group of schools. Together with strong leaders on the proprietorial body, school leaders take advantage of the services and support offered by the Cambian Group. For example, the school has excellent relationships with a local partner school. Staff from both schools train together and leaders share successful strategies. As a result, the quality of education at the Mews School is good.
- Leaders put safeguarding at the heart of the school's work. Staff are knowledgeable about how to help pupils. Staff complete a two-week induction training at the start of the year. This makes sure that staff understand the ways in which they can protect pupils. Leaders and staff are well aware of the links between child sexual exploitation and the risks of radicalisation and take effective steps to minimise risk. Safeguarding training takes place every week, and at these sessions staff improve the ways in which they help pupils stay safe. These meetings allow staff to learn about childhood trauma, and this improves the quality of their mentoring and guidance for pupils.
- Leaders make sure staff work together in the same classroom whenever they can, and there is a lively dialogue about what techniques work best. Leaders give teachers an opportunity to shadow other staff in similar schools in the Cambian Group. As a result, teachers are particularly skilled at behaviour management.
- Leaders have put in place a wide range of clinical provision. Pupils work with occupational therapists, educational psychologists and psychotherapists on a regular basis. This means that pupils learn successfully how to talk about and reflect on their emotions.
- The school's behaviour policy is fit for purpose. Staff are consistent in its application, giving a fair balance of consequence and reward to pupils. Staff know how to speak in a direct and thoughtful manner to pupils, modelling turn taking, careful listening and a quiet tone of voice. As a result, behaviour is good.
- All pupils are with SEND, although none, currently on roll, have education health and care plans. Leaders are working to assess pupils, and they apply to local authorities for such plans so that additional support can be secured. All pupils are from backgrounds of disadvantage. Leaders and staff have written detailed individual learning plans for each

pupil. These link well to pupils' personal education plans (PEPS).

- The curriculum is designed by leaders to build on the qualifications pupils have been taking before they come on roll at the school. The school works closely with local authorities and the pupils' previous schools. Leaders make sure high-quality, accreditable courses in English and mathematics are at the core of what pupils study. They also enter pupils for accreditable courses in, for example, science, art, religious education and vocational learning. This maximises the chances pupils have to go on to suitable education, employment and training when they leave the school.
- Leaders are in regular communication with local authorities who have placed pupils at the school, and records show that these agencies are pleased with the progress that pupils are making.
- Leaders make sure pupils' welfare is well managed. Each pupil has what the school calls an 'individual learning plan'. This brings together baseline assessments, an attainment record, progress targets, an 'attendance flight-path', 'academic flight-path' and the PEP. The result is that staff have a rounded picture of pupils' skill needs and welfare. Pupils are valued, and staff understand them.
- The headteacher has developed an effective PSHE curriculum. Leaders call it 'success, training, education, progression and any additional support needed'. Pupils target changes they want to make in their lives, and staff work intensively to help them achieve success. Pupils learn well about healthy lifestyles. Consequently, pupils are making improvements in their motivation and commitment to education.
- Pupils have good quality, independent, careers information and guidance. Pupils say they feel motivated and ambitious. A typical comment came from a pupil who said, 'I am aware of my own destiny and I want to make something of myself.'
- Pupils learn effectively about equal opportunities. Leaders place careers education and guidance at the centre of the curriculum. Staff believe it is crucial that pupils have a sense of hope and optimism for the future despite what they may have experienced. Pupils respond well to this and spoke of their aims to be aid workers, midwives and solicitors.
- Pupils follow a rich social, moral, spiritual and cultural curriculum. They learn how to respect people with lives which are different to their own. For example, pupils wrote sympathetically about refugee children. Leaders have arranged visits to a local mosque, a Sikh temple and a Christian church and, as a result, pupils learn about different faith traditions. Pupils have created art work to accompany their poetry about homelessness. Pupils are involved in decisions about the life of the school, for example when drawing up the rules of school council meetings and being involved in choosing the new school uniform.

Governance

- Governance at the school is effective. It is led by representatives of the Cambian Group of Schools, which is the proprietorial body. The national and regional education managers challenge and support the new headteacher well. The headteacher is valued and trusted to plan and evaluate the school.
- Pupils' safety and welfare are at the heart of the proprietors' governance. They have ensured that policies and practices are fit for purpose. They monitor safeguarding

regularly and well, ensuring that staff have the training they need.

- Leaders and proprietors share the same vision to transform the lives of young people who have had turbulent and inconsistent experiences of education. Together, the proprietor and school leaders communicate effectively their vision that 'all can achieve' to the rest of the staff and pupils.
- Leaders and proprietors have a strong system for quality assuring teaching and learning at the school. They have modified the Cambian Group approach to suit the circumstances of the school. Leaders have provided the proprietor with accurate information about pupils' abilities, needs and aptitudes. This means proprietors are able to make effective decisions about the next steps in the school's development.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff take great care to understand the needs of each child and the risks they encounter. Staff share appropriate information well with each other and other agencies. This results in detailed and effective planning that keeps pupils safe.
- The school's safeguarding policy is clear and fit for purpose. It is available at the school on request. It has very well-informed information for staff on how to support pupils. For example, there are well developed systems to teach pupils about the dangers of child sexual exploitation, 'honour based' violence, female genital mutilation and modern slavery. The school's PSHE curriculum has well-planned lessons on avoiding and reporting extremism and radicalisation. Pupils feel safe enough to talk about these issues and the concerns that they have about safety. Pupils learn how to trust appropriate adults.
- Leaders use detailed and thorough risk assessments for each pupil and for school and extra-curricular activities. Risk assessments link well to pupils' PEPs and individual learning plans. Staff use them in their lesson planning. As a result, pupils are kept safe and secure.
- The single central record is thorough and pre-employment checks are extensive. For example, leaders ensure that they speak directly to those who have written references. Leaders then make sure all new staff undergo a two-week induction programme on the wide range of safeguarding needs that pupils present.
- When pupils have been successfully referred to the school, staff plan detailed transition programmes. The effect of these is that risks that have been presented to pupils in the past are well known to staff and leaders make sure pupils are well prepared with therapeutic support.
- Pupils learn well how to stay safe on the school site. They follow clear guidelines for staying safe when using the school's information technology. The school's proprietors support staff with expertise in how to keep pupils secure when using computers and the internet.
- Staff understand well the additional barriers they face to safeguarding pupils with SEND. As a result, they help pupils develop self-confidence. Staff are well trained to build trusting relationships with their pupils, and pupils are beginning to speak more openly about their needs.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Teachers adopt a nurturing approach to learning so that pupils are safe and have ambitious academic targets. Pupils respond well to this and show good effort and commitment to their learning. Pupils support each other and want the best for one another.
- Staff plan imaginative and interesting lessons. For example, pupils read an extract from an animal rights text and then persuaded readers to make donations to a relevant charity. Pupils were thoroughly engaged in learning by taking part in a sleuthing project called 'The Croydon Cat Disappearance Mystery'. In another example, pupils learned effectively about newspaper articles through a unit of language learning called 'Accrington Stanley Football Fan Lost His False Teeth'. The result is that pupils enjoy their learning.
- The school's assessment policy is a strength. It helps pupils make good progress because baseline assessments are accurate. Teachers plan challenging learning based on a good knowledge of pupils' starting points. Pupils take a variety of assessments when they start at the school. Staff use the resulting information well to form a balanced view of the skills pupils need. As a result, teachers plan learning effectively.
- Wherever it is available, leaders share information with staff about pupils' skill development in their previous schools or settings. This means that disruption to pupils' learning is minimised.
- Pupils show pride in their work. Their folders and workbooks are well organised and presented. Pupils' art work shows commitment and an interest in using a variety of media.
- Pupils have learned how to make improvements in their work. They find teachers' feedback helpful. Pupils know what skills they need to work on. This is especially strong in English.
- At the moment, pupils do not have a wide enough range of fiction books from which to choose. This limits the extent of pupils' independent reading. Leaders plan to improve this, in the next stage of the school's development, through the introduction of classroom libraries.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good in most subjects. It is less advanced in mathematics reasoning, and leaders are addressing this through training and in their recruitment plans.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. In the short time pupils have been at the school, they have made important improvements in their personal development. They have become more confident and self-assured. They understand how to be a successful learner. This is significant because pupils' experience of school has been varied and inconsistent.
- Staff and leaders work closely with other agencies who are involved in pupils' welfare to plan carefully and effectively for pupils' development. Staff successfully use their

extensive knowledge of trauma and therapeutic care. As a result, pupils gain positive awareness.

- Pupils learn well how to think about their personal development. Staff work with pupils on what they call an 'individual learning plan.' In this plan, pupils agree to focus on clearly defined steps in their personal welfare. This is supported by good-quality guidance and careers information from teachers, teaching assistants and independent agencies.
- Staff work successfully to give pupils the vocabulary to talk about emotions and relationships. Pupils are given effective opportunities to talk and write about their feelings. Staff are well trained to help pupils learn about sensitive and complex personal issues. As a result, pupils are increasingly skilled at reflecting on their own personal development.
- Staff model how to use appropriate tones of voice and safe distances between one another and equipment, and this helps prevent poor behaviour. The effect is that pupils are making good progress in staying focused, concentrating and being self-disciplined.
- Pupils follow a strong PSHE curriculum. This means that they understand about healthy living. Pupils demonstrate in their workbooks and in discussions that, for example, they know about the dangers of drug taking, how to plan a healthy diet and how to take positive steps to improve mental health. Pupils develop confidence and an enjoyment of physical education, for example, through swimming and challenging outdoor education.
- Local authorities are highly supportive of the school's welfare provision. A virtual school headteacher spoke of the efficient and professional manner in which the school sets up liaison meetings and shares information helpfully. This means that professionals in different agencies work well together and pupils are well cared for.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons and at social times, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils have respect for staff and each other. There is a positive and happy ethos at the school. The whole community works well to create a sense of optimism and hope.
- Pupils learn effectively how to conduct themselves appropriately. This is because staff give them clear instructions, plenty of helpful guidance and consistently apply rewards and consequences. The PSHE curriculum helps pupils learn how to listen thoughtfully to one another and to their teachers. Staff are skilled at behaviour management and, as a result, pupils are helped to prevent poor behaviour. When unacceptable behaviour occurs, it happens rarely and is always challenged. This means pupils have a clear understanding of boundaries and feel that staff are fair.
- Records of pupil behaviour show that incidents of troubling behaviour are low. There has been no need for physical restraint. Pupils say that bullying does not happen. This is because, for example, staff monitor and analyse the wide range of behaviours that pupils exhibit. As a result, staff adopt successful strategies for improving behaviour.
- The school environment is respected by pupils. They are appreciative that it is a new and purpose-built school and they like the modern facilities and decoration. Displays are used to remind pupils of their careers options and possible salaries and to promote healthy attitudes to school. Pupils value them and are involved in their design and upkeep.

- Pupils' attendance is good and improving. This is noteworthy because for some pupils, their attendance at school has either been very low or non-existent. Staff work well with their colleagues in other agencies to promote good attendance.
- Pupils' punctuality is not yet good at the start of the day. Some pupils are in the early stages of learning how to get ready for school. Staff and leaders are aware of this and work closely with other agencies to improve this skill.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils are making good progress in a range of subjects, including English and most aspects of mathematics.
- Pupils' workbooks show especially effective progress in English, health and social care, art, and employability skills. Staff ensure that pupils who speak English as an additional language get the support they need.
- Pupils' literacy skills are well developed across the curriculum. For example, pupils are making strong progress in inference skills, writing clear sentences and imaginative and descriptive writing. For instance, a recent piece of writing about Madam Tussaud's museum illustrated how much ground pupils have made up in the short time they have been at the school. Their writing is well organised, interesting and pupils use a good range of vocabulary.
- Pupils' non-fiction reading skills are good. This is because pupils are helped to read with confidence, to understand how non-fiction gains the attention of readers and how to ask questions about what texts mean. In their responses to a text about refugees from Syria, pupils showed how well they have developed skills of close reading, paying attention to meaning and understanding the writer's intentions.
- Pupils make less progress in independent fiction reading. This is because, currently, there are not enough fiction books. Leaders are aware of this and have plans to build up the range of texts available to pupils in hard copy and online.
- In mathematics, pupils make good progress in a range of skills. For example, pupils develop strong skills in working out averages, using bar charts, calculation and accurate mental mathematics. For example, in their work analysing the speeches of Martin Luther King, pupils had calculated the most frequent occurrences of different types of words. They presented their findings clearly and used mathematical terms well.
- Where pupils make less progress, it is in the skills of mathematical reasoning. Leaders have clear plans to develop teachers' ability to help pupils make better progress in this area.
- Pupils make good progress in humanities subjects, especially history. For example, pupils show strong understanding of the reasons for the gunpowder plot. Pupils' information technology (IT) skills are good. For instance, they have used IT to produce tourist information leaflets showing well-developed skills of pagination, research and editing.
- All pupils at the school are disadvantaged. All pupils in the school are with SEND. They achieve good outcomes because staff have implemented pupils' individual learning plans well. Pupils' social and emotional needs are well known and managed. As a result, pupils make good progress in skills of resilience, self-confidence and teamwork.

- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, employment or training. Leaders and staff ensure good outcomes for pupils because they plan well and liaise effectively with pupils' previous and future education providers.

School details

Unique reference number	145468
DfE registration number	893/6034
Inspection number	10056211

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	Other 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	3
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cambian Group
Headteacher	Tonia Lewis
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,500
Website	There is no website and this is for safeguarding reasons.
Email address	newsschooladmin@cambianguroup.com
Date of previous inspection	Pre-registration inspection 27 February 2018

Information about this school

- The school has recently opened, following registration with the Department for Education on 15 May 2018. Ofsted conducted a pre-registration inspection on 27 February 2018. This was the school's first standard inspection.
- The school is part of Cambian Group of schools. The Cambian Group is the proprietorial body.
- This is a small independent school that offers education for pupils with a range of SEND. Pupils are placed at the school from a variety of local authorities.
- There are no pupils currently on roll in the sixth form or in key stage 3. There are no boys currently on roll.
- The school has no religious denomination.

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning across the school and scrutinised a wide range of pupils' workbooks and folders.
- The inspector held a range of meetings with the headteacher and other leadership staff and met with representatives of the proprietorial body. There were discussions with a local authority virtual headteacher, the headteacher of a partner, special school and the provider of the school's outdoor education.
- There were meetings held with pupils and the inspector discussed with them their learning and welfare.
- The inspector scrutinised the single central record, met with the designated safeguarding lead and scrutinised a range of records of recruitment, welfare plans and actions taken to keep pupils safe.
- There was scrutiny of a wide range of documentation that the school produces as part of its self-evaluation. The inspector evaluated the school's development planning, policies and documents made available during the inspection.
- The inspector considered the eight responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Graham Tyrer, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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