

Cambian Potterspury Lodge School

Potterspury Lodge, Towcester, Northamptonshire NN12 7LL

Inspection dates

6 February 2019

Overall outcome

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

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1), 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii), 2(2)(e)(iii)

- At the previous inspection, leaders had not ensured that the careers advice and guidance for secondary-aged pupils was impartial.
- Leaders have made vast improvements to the careers advice and guidance offered by the school. Following the last inspection, the school audited the careers curriculum using the Gatsby benchmarks, in accordance with the government's careers strategy. As a result, the school's careers advice has become impartial. Leaders have employed a careers consultant from an external company to work with pupils and help them to realise their ambitions. Pupils and parents are involved in the careers advice and pupils' aspirations are included into their education, health and care plans.
- Careers advice begins in Year 8 when pupils learn about different professions. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 had the opportunity to take part in work experience. The majority of pupils in post-16 have continued to attend work experience placements regularly. External providers are invited into school to deliver workshops. Some pupils have visited Northampton University to find out more about the courses they offer.
- Careers guidance is based on pupils' aspirations and identifies future destinations where pupils can realise their aims. Most older pupils know which college they want to attend and which course they want to study when they leave school.
- The school now meets the requirements of paragraphs 2(2)(e), 2(2)(e)(i), 2(2)(e)(ii) and 2(2)(e)(iii) to meet standard 2(1) because they provide up-to-date and impartial careers advice to enable pupils to achieve their potential.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(g), 3(h)

- At the previous inspection, this standard was not met because leaders had not ensured that pupils made consistently good progress, particularly in English. In addition, the assessment framework was confusing. The assessments that teachers used did not relate to the curriculum that was taught in the primary phase. As a result, the assessments did not inform teachers well enough about the progress pupils were making. The targets that pupils were set in their individual education plans were not specific to their learning. Finally, some staff felt they had not had enough training or

support to manage the behaviour of some pupils who had complex and challenging needs.

- The quality of teaching is improving, and pupils are now provided with opportunities to acquire new knowledge and make good progress in the vast majority of subjects that are taught. In English, the teaching staff take into account the pupils' targets in their individual education plans to set work for pupils which is suitably challenging. Pupils discussed articulately their research projects. Pupils have researched the differences and similarities of mobile phones. They are knowledgeable and able to be very persuasive about the conclusions of their research.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. In French, the teacher encouraged correct pronunciation when learning grammatical structures of the language. In food technology, pupils have been taught how to use knives safely. Pupils have learned about food from different cultures around the world. As part of celebrating Chinese New Year, pupils have marinated chicken in preparation to make a stir fry. Pupils cook to a high standard. In physical education, pupils are becoming competent at badminton and demonstrate good hand-eye coordination.
- In science, despite good teacher subject knowledge, teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to develop their understanding of scientific vocabulary or concepts. As a result, pupils become confused and some become disengaged in their learning.
- Following the previous inspection, the assessment framework has been changed. There is now a clear system in place to judge pupils' progress in the secondary phase. As there are very few pupils in the primary phase, assessments have been tailored to meet the needs of individuals to enable teachers and pupils to judge progress.
- Standardised assessments are used to assess pupils' ability on entry to the school. Teachers use the results of these assessments to set pupils' targets and provide work to enable pupils to make progress. Pupils are assessed regularly, and teachers check whether pupils are meeting their targets. If pupils are at risk of underachieving, extra support is provided. Staff and pupils have a good understanding of the assessment system and are better informed about the progress that pupils make.
- The school's record-keeping of behaviour shows that pupils' behaviour has not improved since the last inspection. The number of behavioural incidents in the current academic year is far higher than in the last academic year. Staff have received training to help manage pupils' behaviour. Leaders believe that the training has empowered more staff to report incidents of poor behaviour. However, the large increase in the incidents of poor behaviour shows that not enough pupils are being respectful to the staff.
- The requirements to meet paragraphs 3(a) and 3(g) have been met because teachers provide opportunities for pupils to make good progress in their learning and have an assessment framework in place to enable teachers to plan future learning.
- Leaders have not ensured that paragraph 3(h) has been met to meet standard 3. Standard 3 is not met. Leaders have not ensured that strategies used to manage pupils' behaviour have been effective.

Part 2. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

Paragraphs 5, 5(b), 5b(iii)

- At the last inspection, this standard was not met because staff had not always given the pupils the opportunity to reflect on and learn from their poor behaviour.
- Staff provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their behaviour. This enables pupils to discuss the effects of poor behaviour with staff and make them fully aware of the consequences of their actions. Leaders' latest analysis shows that the vast majority of incidents of poor behaviour are now discussed with pupils. This compares with only 61% of incidents of poor behaviour discussed with pupils at the time of the last inspection. Leaders believe this has made pupils more aware of the harmful effects of poor behaviour, particularly bullying. There was a decrease in the number of incidents of bullying last term.
- Pupils have been positively contributing to the lives of people in the local community. They have brought in food to donate to the local foodbank. Some pupils delivered a presentation about autism to a local school to increase awareness of special educational needs to similar-aged pupils. The school council voted to fundraise for the mental health charity MIND by organising non-uniform days. Pupils have an increased understanding of how they can contribute to the lives of others.
- The requirements of paragraphs 5(b) and 5(b)(iii) have been met to meet standard 5 because leaders have provided opportunities for pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour and contribute to the lives of others.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

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

- At the previous inspection, these standards were not met because leaders had not ensured that safeguarding incidents were recorded in a timely and accurate fashion and were sufficiently detailed.
- Scrutiny of the school's safeguarding records shows that incidents have been recorded in a timely manner and most with sufficient detail. Leaders take swift action following a concern raised and discuss their actions regularly with each other to ensure that everyone is informed. Very occasionally, not all actions taken are fully recorded to ensure that all records are robust.
- Safeguarding training has been a high priority for staff. Staff have received regular training on a range of issues including child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. The staff are very knowledgeable about the potential risks that pupils could face. These include pupils being radicalised or being lured into carrying drugs, known as county lines. Staff are vigilant and identify changes in a pupil's behaviour which could be of concern. The staff know how to report a concern and how to escalate a concern if they do not feel leaders are taking the appropriate action to resolve the issue.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of how to stay safe on the internet and they are reminded regularly in computing lessons. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and can go to a member of staff if they have a concern.

- Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are effective in the school because action is taken quickly in response to concerns raised. Staff are knowledgeable about safeguarding and remain vigilant. The requirements for paragraphs 7(a) and 7(b) have been met to meet standard 7.

Paragraphs 8, 8(a), 8(b)

- Safeguarding arrangements are not effective for pupils who board at the school. Social care regulatory inspectors, who inspected the school's boarding provision at the same time as the education inspection took place, report that there are unmet national minimum standards for residential special schools. There are concerns about the welfare of pupils who board, the standard of record-keeping of safeguarding incidents, and the expertise of some members of the staff team who work in the residential setting.
- Some staff have not consistently followed school procedures following safeguarding incidents in the residential setting. Consequently, this has put children and staff in unsafe situations. Record-keeping of safeguarding incidents is not consistently comprehensive to ensure that all the necessary details are recorded. Leaders have reviewed these incidents thoroughly and put in place measures to avoid repeat occurrences.
- Leaders have not ensured that the requirements to meet paragraphs 8(a) and 8(b) to meet standard 8 have been met. There are unmet national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Paragraphs 9, 9(a), 9(b)

- At the previous inspection, this standard was not met because leaders had not ensured that the school's behaviour policy was being consistently applied by all staff.
- The behaviour policy has been revised. Poor behaviour has been categorised into four stages. The policy provides examples of poor behaviour for each stage and of sanctions to be used. Leaders have worked hard to communicate the new policy to staff. They have led staff training on behaviour and are proactive at resolving incidents of poor behaviour. However, the consistent application of the policy by all staff has been too slow and is still not promoting good behaviour by pupils.
- The number of incidents of poor behaviour in the autumn term of the current academic year was over five times the number of incidents in the same period of time in the preceding school year. Leaders believe that this is due to more staff following the policy and accurately reporting incidents. However, there has been not yet been a downward trend in the number of incidents of poor behaviour recorded since the last inspection. As a result, the behaviour of pupils remains a concern.
- The number of behavioural incidents which require physical intervention has increased markedly in the current academic year. Although the majority of incidents involve a small minority of pupils, there has still been a large increase in the number of incidents involving other pupils overall. Leaders believe that the increase is due to higher expectations being placed on pupils in lessons. Leaders are providing pupils with opportunities to reflect on their behaviour and providing incentives each week to reward good behaviour. However, these initiatives are not yet impacting quickly enough on the frequency of poor behaviour which disrupts learning.

- The frequency of exclusions has risen since the last inspection. Pupils have been excluded for assaulting staff, racist abuse and dangerous behaviour. There is no downward trend in the number of exclusions.
- Pupils report that incidents of racial abuse occur in school. School records also show incidents of racial abuse. Some pupils are not aware that some of their language related to race is offensive. The school has taken part in the 'Let's Kick Racism Out of Football' project. However, this anti-racism message is not yet fully understood by some pupils.
- The school has been more successful in communicating anti-homophobia messages. Pupils report that homophobic incidents at the school are very few. School records of homophobic incidents are very low.
- Pupils' attendance is low. In the last academic year, overall attendance was below that of similar schools. Furthermore, the proportion of pupils who were persistently absent was over half the total number of pupils. This is considerably higher than for similar schools nationally. In the current year, attendance has improved but is still below the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced, but remains above the national average.
- The requirements for paragraph 9(a) have been met because leaders have revised the behaviour policy which includes the sanctions to be used in the event of pupil misbehaviour.
- The requirements for paragraph 9(b) have not been met to meet standard 9 because leaders have not ensured that the policy has been implemented effectively. The number of incidents of poor behaviour and exclusions has risen since the last inspection. Incidents of racial abuse are prevalent. Pupils' attendance is lower than for similar schools nationally.
- Standard 9 is not met.

Paragraph 11

- At the last inspection, this standard had not been met because leaders had not implemented the health and safety policy effectively. Health and safety checks were too lax and there were numerous breaches of standards in this area. Not all electrical equipment had been subject to the necessary testing.
- Leaders have responded well to the shortcomings in health and safety identified at the last inspection. Regular checks are carried out to ensure that the site is safe. All electrical equipment has been subjected to the required testing.
- Standard 11 is now met.

Paragraph 12

- In the last inspection, this standard was not met because staff were unaware of where fire extinguishers were stored. Several fire notices were missing, and fire doors were locked.
- Fire extinguishers are displayed around the school building. They have been checked by an external company. Fire exit signs are displayed appropriately and fire doors are not locked. The school has commissioned a fire risk assessment and carries out regular fire tests on different call points. Pupils learn about fire safety and take part in regular fire drills.

- Standard 12 is now met.

Paragraph 13

- At the previous inspection, this standard had not been met because out-of-date, first-aid items had not been replaced.
- The school has a plentiful supply of first-aid equipment. The first-aid boxes are checked regularly to ensure that the items inside are up-to-date and in good supply.
- Standard 13 is now met.

Paragraph 16

- At the last inspection, risk assessments for pupils did not have clear information of how potential hazards should be managed.
- Risk assessments contain information for staff to help manage risks. The school has audited their health and safety procedures which included the use of risk assessments. Risk assessments have been completed for the site, for example for the risks associated with the lake in the school grounds.
- Staff have also completed risk assessments for each pupil. These include important information to help keep pupils safe both on-site and for off-site activities.
- Standard 16 is now met.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraph 25

- At the previous inspection, this standard was not met because there was damp in a primary classroom.
- The mould has been removed from the primary classroom. The walls were cleaned and decorated. No new mould has reappeared. Classrooms are well lit and contain appropriate furniture to provide suitable conditions for learning.
- Standard 25 is now met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(a), 34(b), 34(c)

- At the last inspection, leaders had not ensured that the school's safeguarding policy was implemented effectively. Leaders had not ensured that there was adequate provision in place for pupils in need of psychological and therapeutic support. Leaders had not communicated well enough to pupils and parents about staffing changes. The school's health and safety policy had not been adhered to. Checks regarding health and safety were not robust. Staff have not received adequate training to manage pupils' behaviour. Plans to improve teaching, learning and assessment had not been fully implemented. Finally, success criteria in the school's improvement plan were not sharp enough.
- The school's safeguarding policy has been updated to include the latest government guidance. Staff have read the latest guidance and demonstrate a good knowledge of safeguarding issues. Designated leaders meet regularly to discuss concerns and the regional director quality assures case files to ensure that actions taken by leaders are timely. Leaders have put in place a multi-disciplinary team to provide therapeutic and psychological support for pupils. Changes to staffing in this team have been

communicated to parents through newsletters and on the school's website.

- The headteacher has attended health and safety training to enable her to monitor the effectiveness of the school's procedures in this area. The school has used the expertise from the proprietor to ensure that health and safety matters are identified and resolved.
- Leaders have ensured that staff have received training to manage pupils' behaviour. More staff have been confident to help manage challenging situations where pupils' behaviour is of concern. Leaders believe that the increased training of managing pupils' behaviour has led to more incidents of poor behaviour being reported by staff.
- Teaching is improving. Work is matched to meet the abilities of the pupils, although not consistently. There are occasions when the most able are not challenged well enough. The new assessment system is understood by staff and pupils and demonstrates the progress that pupils are making. This has motivated pupils to work harder and improve their progress further.
- The school development plan still has success criteria which are not measurable. This makes it more difficult for the proprietor to hold leaders to account for the improvement of the school. Leaders have not communicated school improvement priorities successfully. School staff are not aware of the priorities. Furthermore, the priorities listed in the school development plan are not consistently the same priorities listed in the school's self-evaluation document. Consequently, it is confusing to identify which are the school's main priorities for improvement.
- Leaders are not consistent in how they evaluate the school's effectiveness. The school self-evaluation document provided to inspectors graded the school as good in all areas of the school's work. During the inspection, leaders informed inspectors that some areas of the school's effectiveness were below good. Where leaders judge the school's effectiveness to be less than good, it is not consistently clear in the school development plan how leaders intend to improve the school's provision. Consequently, leaders are not taking swift enough action to systematically rectify weaknesses.
- Leaders have not taken into account the weaknesses of the school to accurately evaluate its effectiveness. For example, leaders graded behaviour and personal development as good even though their own analysis of behaviour has shown an increase in the incidents of poor behaviour and of exclusions. Actions taken by leaders to improve behaviour have been too slow since the last inspection to show a positive impact on pupils' conduct.
- The regional director has made a positive difference since joining the school for four days a week in November 2018. She has raised expectations for pupils' behaviour in school and supported the assistant headteacher with responsibility for behaviour to implement the school's policy. She has clarified roles and responsibilities of leaders. They feel more confident in carrying out their roles. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this work.
- Leaders have not met the requirements of paragraphs 34(a), 34(b) and 34(c) to meet standard 34(1). Leaders have not ensured that the school development plan contains measurable success criteria by which leaders can be held to account for the improvement of the school. Leaders do not consistently self-evaluate the school's effectiveness accurately, or plan to improve known weaknesses quickly and effectively. Pupils' behaviour remains a concern and too many pupils are still persistently absent.

Leaders have not ensured that all the national minimum standards for residential special schools have been met.

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for residential special schools and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. 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

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(2)(e) for pupils receiving secondary education, access to accurate, up-to-date careers guidance that-
 - 2(2)(e)(i) is presented in an impartial manner
 - 2(2)(e)(ii) enables them to make informed choices about a broad range of career options; and
 - 2(2)(e)(iii) helps them to fulfil their potential.
- 3 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the teaching at the school-
 - 3(a) 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;
 - 3(g) demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress.
- 5 The standard about the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school is met if the proprietor-
 - 5(b)(iii) encourages pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely.
- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 9(a) A written behaviour policy is drawn up that, among other matters, sets out sanctions to be adopted in the event of pupil misbehaviour.

- 11 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that relevant health and safety laws are complied with by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written health and safety policy.
- 12 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005[12].
- 13 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that first aid is administered in a timely and competent manner by drawing up and effective implementation of a written first aid policy.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 16(a) 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
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.
- 25 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured.

School details

Unique reference number	122136
Social care unique reference number	SC012962
DfE registration number	928/6039
Inspection number	10089324

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.

The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Other independent special school
School status	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Number of boarders on roll	7
Proprietor	Cambian Education
Chair	Anne Marie Carrie
Headteacher	Lise Sugden
Annual fees (day pupils)	£49,223 to £67,777
Telephone number	01908 542 912
Website	www.cambiangroup.com
Email address	potterspurymail@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous standard inspection	13–15 March 2018

Information about this school

- Cambian Potterspury Lodge is an independent residential special school. The school is situated in spacious grounds near to Towcester.
- The school caters for pupils who have autism spectrum disorder. Many also have challenging behaviour and complex needs.
- A regional director for Cambian Education commenced working at the school in November 2018 for four days a week to support senior leaders.
- The school was last inspected in March 2018.

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 school's standard full inspection in March 2018. The inspection was conducted without notice.
- Following the school's previous inspection, the school was asked to complete an action plan. The action plan was evaluated on 30 October 2018. The DfE rejected the action plan.
- This inspection was an aligned inspection with social care. Social care regulatory inspectors carried out a standard inspection of the residential setting on 6–8 February 2019.
- Meetings were held with the regional director of education, the headteacher, the head of education, the assistant headteacher for behaviour, the assistant headteacher for assessment and post-16 education. Inspectors spoke with pupils, teachers and teaching assistants. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the school day and by telephone.
- Inspectors toured the school building and observed learning in all classes. Inspectors also reviewed safeguarding records and documentation related to exclusions, behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Martin Finch, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janis Warren

Ofsted Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

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

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act [11] applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that-
 - 8(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
 - 8(b) such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.
- 9 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor promotes good behaviour amongst pupils by ensuring that-
 - 9(b) the policy is implemented effectively.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school-
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

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