

Cambian Somerset School

Creech Court, Mill Lane, Creech St Michael, Taunton, Somerset TA3 5PX

Inspection dates

9 July 2019

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraphs 2(1)(b)(i), 3, 3(a), 3(b), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(h)

- Since the last standard inspection, leaders have ensured that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains good. Inspection evidence confirms that teachers are well qualified. As a result, they have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. Teachers' passion motivates pupils to acquire new skills, learn well and make strong progress. For example, in art, pupils produce work of a high quality using a range of mediums, such as water colours and clay. Some of this work has been sent to London for display.
- Pupils who attend this school have significant and varied complex needs. Often, they have been to several schools and do not have a positive view of education. Consequently, many pupils have significant gaps in their learning.
- Leaders have introduced a system which carefully tracks what pupils can and cannot do. Teachers use this information to plan lessons which are bespoke to pupils' individual needs. For example, some pupils are working to achieve their GCSEs in a range of subjects, including English, mathematics and science.
- The work in pupils' books and portfolios, together with individual progress reports, confirms that pupils are typically making good progress in the subjects they study. Nonetheless, leaders are not complacent and are keen for pupils to achieve their full potential. For example, leaders have identified the need to make improvements to pupils' use of grammar, spelling and punctuation in their written work.
- The standards in this paragraph are met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 32(1)(c)

- The school's safeguarding policy takes account of the most recent government legislation and guidance. Staff have a good understanding of the school's safeguarding policies and procedures.
- Staff receive high-quality training and timely updates on keeping pupils safe. For

example, staff have undertaken training on female genital mutilation and how to protect pupils from the influence of radicalisation and extreme views. As a result, staff are confident in the action they should take if they have any concerns about the safety of a pupil.

- The school's systems to check the suitability of staff to work with pupils meet requirements. Leaders understand the importance of safer recruitment. This ensures that all staff are carefully vetted before they start employment to confirm that they are suitable to work with children.
- Staff form positive and trusting relationships with pupils. All pupils spoken with during the inspection reported that they are happy and feel safe in school. 'An amazing school', 'Wonderful. The staff are nice people who look after me and care for me' and 'a very nice school to come to' are just three of the positive comments made by pupils.
- The school's safeguarding policy is published on the school's website and is easily accessible. The policy pays due regard to the guidance issued by the Secretary of State, which includes, 'Keeping children safe in education', 2018.

Paragraphs 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10

- Behaviour in the school is good. Policies are securely in place and clearly set out the high expectations leaders have of pupils' behaviour. Pupils appreciate the rewards system where they can gain points for positive behaviours which include attitudes to learning and working hard. They spoke excitedly about the rewards they can earn, including trips. Pupils have a good understanding of the behaviours which are not acceptable and are clear about the consequences should their behaviour fall below the high expectations of staff.
- Each pupil has a 'student learning passport'. These passports provide detailed information, for example pupils' learning styles, triggers that heighten their anxious behaviours and techniques which help keep them calm. As a result, recorded incidents of serious misbehaviour and the number of fixed-term exclusions are falling.
- Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that the good behaviour viewed by the inspector during the visit 'is typical'. They explained to the inspector that 'We can share worries and anxieties with any adult and know that they will be acted upon.'
- Pupils who spoke with the inspector were adamant that bullying in the school is extremely rare. On these occasions, pupils commented, 'It is quickly sorted' by staff and school leaders.
- Inspection evidence confirmed that the number of incidents which require pupils to be physically restrained has significantly reduced since the previous standard inspection. Pupils confirmed this by telling the inspector that they could not remember the last time anyone was restrained.

Paragraph 14

- Pupils are well supervised throughout the school day, during lessons and in social time. For example, at lunchtimes, staff and pupils eat together and enjoy the opportunity to socialise. Staff and pupils made comments to the inspector regarding the strong relationships they have with one another, a typical comment by a staff

member being, '[I] love it here, looking at the best in every student, looking at what they can do, rather than what they can't do.'

Paragraph 16

- Risk assessments are in place for individual pupils and for activities within school and beyond. Risk assessments viewed, for example for climbing, are comprehensive and checked by leaders to ensure that they are fit for purpose to minimise risk to pupils and keep them safe.
- The standards in paragraphs 7, 7(a), 7(b), 32(1), 9(a), 9(b), 9(c), 10, 14 and 16 are met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

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

- Clear leadership by the new headteacher, with strong support from the regional education lead for Cambian Education, continues to improve the quality of education and care of pupils.
- Staff spoken with during the inspection describe the leadership of the headteacher as 'brilliant'. Staff describe how there are strong relationships between school leaders and staff. As a result, staff share the vision and determination of leaders in ensuring that the school provides pupils with a high level of education and care.
- The proprietor and leaders of Cambian Somerset School have ensured that the independent school standards are met.
- The standard in paragraph 34(1) is met.

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 that were checked during this inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	131455
DfE registration number	933/6211
Inspection number	10105671

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 status	Independent school
Age range of pupils	10 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	30
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	2
Number of part-time pupils	2
Proprietor	Cambian Education
Chair	Josh Fitzgerald
Headteacher	Stuart Lambert
Annual fees (day pupils)	£41,500 to £51,500
Telephone number	01823 443 133
Website	www.cambiangroup.com/childrensservices/specialisteducationservices/esddayschools.aspx
Email address	education@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous standard inspection	14–16 March 2018

Information about this school

- Cambian Somerset School is an independent co-educational day school for pupils who have autism spectrum disorder and social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- The school is owned by the Cambian Group, which provides specialist education and behavioural services for children. The company aims to 'actively enable each and every

one of the people in our care to achieve their personal best, however it is defined by them or for them'.

- The school uses four alternative providers: Project One, REACH, Conquest Centre and EAQ.
- The school's previous standard inspection was undertaken on 14 to 16 March 2018, when the school was judged to be good.
- The school is led by the headteacher, who took up post in November 2018.

Information about this inspection

- This emergency inspection was commissioned by the Department for Education in response to a complaint it had received about the school.
- The inspection was conducted without notice.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and the regional education lead for Cambian Education.
- A telephone conversation was held with the Somerset local authority designated officer for safeguarding.
- The inspector observed both indoor and outdoor learning. These observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The quality of pupils' work was evaluated by the inspector.
- The views of pupils and staff were gathered informally during the inspection.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including safeguarding and behaviour policies and information relating to pupils' achievement and progress. Records relating to behaviour and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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