

# Inspection of Cambian Walnut Tree Lodge School

3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, EN6 1AG

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Inspection dates: 29 June and 1 July 2021

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<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
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Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
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Personal development	<b>Good</b>
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Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	<b>Yes</b>
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## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils at Walnut Tree Lodge are friendly and respectful. When they are in school, they get on well with each other and with staff. When pupils join the school, staff work with them to build trust and confidence. Pupils appreciate the time and attention that staff give them. They feel they are listened to and understood.

The school is a calm and purposeful place to be. Behaviour is managed consistently by staff. Pupils are well supported to develop the strategies they need to help them manage their emotions. Pupils show understanding when others are upset and are supportive towards each other. Pupils say bullying is not a problem because staff deal with any issues at an early stage. Pupils feel safe, valued, and respected.

Pupils respond well to the high expectations that staff have of their learning and of their behaviour. As pupils experience success in their learning, staff help them raise their aspirations of what they can achieve. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have improved the quality of education since the previous standard inspection. They have focused their efforts on ensuring that the curriculum is better designed and delivered to meet pupils' needs. Leaders are ambitious for what pupils can achieve. Leaders are clear that they want pupils to 'leave with something' that will support their future education and employment.

When pupils join the school, teachers carry out detailed checks of what pupils know in each subject. These checks identify gaps in pupils' knowledge, as well as what pupils remember from what they have learned before. Generally, teachers use the information they gain from these checks well. Pupils revisit and practise subject knowledge which is less secure. They receive extra sessions in English and mathematics to help secure important knowledge. Leaders acknowledge that there is still some work to do to ensure that teachers use assessment to personalise learning consistently well across all subjects.

Pupils have significant social, emotional, and mental health needs. Care workers and school staff provide effective emotional and pastoral support for pupils. Behaviour management strategies are followed consistently. When they are in school, care workers also take on the role of teaching assistants. Care workers have not received specific training to carry out their role as teaching assistants. This means that support for pupils' learning is not as effective as it could be.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum contributes successfully to pupils' personal development. In physical education (PE), pupils learn the relationship between physical activity and well-being. For example, pupils use their knowledge of yoga breathing techniques to help them when they feel anxious or stressed. In personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils explore issues of racism, tolerance, and

the impact of poverty on the choices people make. Throughout the curriculum, pupils have opportunities to debate, discuss, and explore ideas. They consider issues from different points of view. They explore the rights and responsibilities we have as citizens and celebrate differences. Pupils show maturity in their thinking. Consequently, the school's curriculum is helping pupils gain knowledge and understanding that helps them make informed choices about what they do now and in the future.

Pupils receive guidance and support in preparing for their next steps. Pupils are following career pathways that relate to their knowledge and experience of the world of work. Careers education builds on pupils' interests and their own aspirations for the future. However, pupils' knowledge is limited. The curriculum does not provide pupils with the information they need to consider a wider range of career choices.

The school is well led and managed. Regular meetings take place between the headteacher and the proprietor. There are clear processes for reporting incidents and safeguarding concerns. Leaders and the proprietor understand the requirements of the independent school standards. There are systems in place to ensure that the standards are met. The proprietor challenges and supports school leaders so that the school continues to improve.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. This is because leaders and staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Staff receive regular training. This helps ensure that staff are alert to risks. Leaders ensure that staff have the information they need to support and safeguard pupils effectively. Pupils are supported by a large number of external agencies. Effective communication between the school and these agencies helps keep pupils safe. Record-keeping is thorough and organised.

Statutory checks are carried out for all who work at the school. The proprietor carries out a rigorous safeguarding audit each year. Identified actions are addressed promptly by leaders.

## **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- There are occasions when teachers are not using the assessment information they have precisely enough to tailor the curriculum specifically to meet individual pupils' needs. Leaders need to ensure that teachers are clear about how they make the best use of assessment so that through their curriculum plans, and in lessons, teachers address specific gaps which pupils have in their subject

knowledge, as well as take account of what pupils know, remember and can already do.

- Care workers have not received relevant training to support pupils' learning in school. Leaders must ensure that care workers are provided with the guidance and training they need to support pupils' academic progress as well as they do their personal and emotional needs.
- Leaders have designed a curriculum for careers education that builds on pupils' interests and matches these to potential career goals and the pathways pupils need to take to get there. Leaders need to develop this aspect of the curriculum further. They need to ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to develop their aspirations by broadening their knowledge and experience of possible future careers.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	135990
<b>DfE registration number</b>	822/6014
<b>Local authority</b>	Bedford
<b>Inspection number</b>	10193484
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	9
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	The Cambian Group
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Steve O’Gara
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Joyce Kuwaza
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£41,500
<b>Telephone number</b>	0800 138 1184
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cambiangroup.com">www.cambiangroup.com</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:joyce.kuwaza@cambiangroup.com">joyce.kuwaza@cambiangroup.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	12–14 June 2018

## Information about this school

- Cambian Walnut Tree Lodge is owned by The Cambian Group. The Cambian Group provides a wide range of services for children nationally. In October 2018 The Cambian Group was acquired by CareTech Plc.
- The school was registered by the Department for Education (DfE) in September 2009.
- The school is registered to take a maximum of 18 pupils from the age of seven to 19 years. The school's capacity has increased by three pupils since the previous inspection.
- There are currently no sixth-form students at the school. The relevant plans and resources are in place should pupils who need sixth-form provision join the school.
- All pupils are in the care of the local authority.
- The school provides education for pupils who have social, emotional and/or mental health difficulties.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school does not receive additional funding for disadvantaged pupils.
- The headteacher has been in post since September 2019. Previously she was employed at the school as a lead teacher.
- Inspection history:
  - On 17 July 2009, Ofsted conducted a pre-registration inspection.
  - In May 2010, Ofsted conducted the school's first standard inspection. The school was judged as providing a good standard of education. One of the independent school standards was not met.
  - In June 2012, Ofsted conducted an emergency inspection. Seven of the independent school standards were not met.
  - Following the emergency inspection, the DfE required the school to provide an action plan. The action plan was approved with modifications on 9 December 2012.
  - In December 2012, Ofsted conducted a progress monitoring inspection. Two of the independent school standards were not met.
  - In July 2013, Ofsted conducted a material change inspection.
  - In December 2013, Ofsted conducted a standard inspection. The school was judged as adequate and all the independent school standards were met.
  - In March 2015, Ofsted conducted a material change inspection.
  - In October 2016, Ofsted conducted a standard inspection. The school was judged as requires improvement. Two of the independent school standards were not met.

- Following the October 2016 inspection, the DfE required the proprietor to provide an action plan. Ofsted evaluated an action plan in January 2017 and a second action plan in June 2017.
- In October 2017, Ofsted conducted a progress monitoring inspection. The two independent school standards that were not met at the October 2016 inspection remained unmet.
- Following the October 2017 inspection, the DfE required the proprietor to provide an action plan. Ofsted evaluated the action plan in February 2018.
- In June 2018, Ofsted conducted a standard inspection. The school was judged as requires improvement. The two independent school standards that were not met at the October 2016 inspection and the October 2017 remained unmet.
- Following the June 2018 inspection, the DfE required the proprietor to provide an action plan. Ofsted evaluated an action plan in March 2019.
- In June 2019, Ofsted conducted a progress monitoring inspection. Four of the independent school standards were not met.
- On 29 July 2019, following the June 2019 progress monitoring inspection, the DfE issued the proprietor with a Notice. The DfE required the school to provide an action plan. Ofsted evaluated an action plan in October 2019 and a second action plan in December 2019. The action plan was approved with modifications on 9 December 2019.
- Ofsted conducted a second progress monitoring inspection January 2020. This inspection was commissioned by the DfE. The independent school standards that were checked during this inspection were found to be met.

## **Information about this inspection**

We carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, subject leaders and the trauma schools lead.
- We visited lessons and looked at pupils' work across a range of subjects. We did deep dives in English, mathematics, PE, and PSHE.
- We spoke with subject leaders, teachers, and pupils about their work. We talked with pupils about their wider experience of school life. Adults were present when we spoke with pupils.
- We had a tour of the school site with the headteacher to check that the school still meets the independent standards relating to premises.
- We looked at a range of documentation, including school policies, and the information that the school provides to parents. We looked at leaders' records of attendance and behaviour. We scrutinised the school's records of safeguarding and the single central record of pre-employment checks. We reviewed leaders' evaluation of the school's performance and the school's curriculum plans.
- We held discussions with representatives of The Cambian Group in school and via the telephone.
- We held a telephone conversation with a representative of Tower Hamlets virtual school.
- We reviewed feedback from three parents which was submitted through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View. We considered feedback that was submitted in paper format from three members of staff.

### **Inspection team**

Katherine Douglas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Andrew Hemmings

Her Majesty's Inspector



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