

# Inspection of Chase House School

C/O Cambian Education, 5th Floor Metropolitan House, 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar  
EN6 1AG

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Inspection dates:

29 to 31 March 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous  
inspection

Good

Does the school meet the independent  
school standards?

**Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy school because they feel safe, happy and well-cared for. Staff are determined that pupils will be successful at Chase and understand that many pupils have had negative experiences in the past. When pupils join the school, staff begin to carefully earn their trust. Relationships are warm and positive. This is a strength of the school.

Pupils' behaviour has improved significantly this year. Leaders have high expectations, and most pupils follow the school rules well. Staff support pupils who struggle to manage their feelings and emotions. Staff resolve incidents calmly. Bullying is rare, but pupils say that if it happened, staff would stop it.

Leaders want pupils to do well. They have introduced a new curriculum that includes academic and vocational subjects. Pupils can achieve recognised qualifications in the subjects they study. However, in some subjects, the curriculum plans do not always build well enough on what pupils already know. This limits the progress that pupils can make.

Pupils know how to keep healthy. They are respectful of cultural and religious differences. Leaders are keen to develop more opportunities for pupils to experience the world of work and to make a positive contribution at school and in the local community.

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

A new headteacher was appointed in May 2021. She is ambitious for the school and its pupils. She has high expectations of pupils and staff and has introduced the new school slogan 'reach for the stars'. Staff demonstrate high levels of commitment to the pupils they support.

The proprietor body has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what it needs to do to improve. There is a shared vision for this school to be somewhere where pupils grow in confidence and achieve well.

Leaders have introduced a new curriculum that includes a broad range of subjects. There are plans in place for each subject, but some are not as well developed as they need to be so that pupils can build on what they already know and can do. This includes mathematics. In some topics in mathematics, the sequence of learning does not support pupils well enough to gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the planned tasks. In other subjects, including English and science, plans are more carefully sequenced. These plans set out the knowledge that pupils should gain as they build towards identified curriculum endpoints.

Pupils who join the school have experienced significant disruption to their education in the past. This means that some pupils are at an early stage of learning to read. Leaders prioritise reading and ensure that pupils read every day. Staff provide extra

support for the weakest readers but there is no systematic approach to teaching phonics. This means that the weakest readers are not gaining the skills they need to be able to read with fluency and accuracy.

Leaders regularly review the targets on pupils' individual education, health and care plans (EHC plan). There are appropriate targets and strategies to support pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs. The school supports pupils well in this aspect.

Staff assess pupils in reading, writing and mathematics when they join the school. This is to identify the gaps in their learning and to set individual targets. Sometimes, these targets are too broad and are not matched well enough to pupils' needs. This means that specific gaps in learning for some pupils are not addressed as effectively as they could be.

The nature of many of the pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) means that behaviour can be challenging. The headteacher has rightly focused on improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. A new and effective approach to managing behaviour was introduced and a great deal of work goes into building trust and developing positive relationships between staff and pupils. There has been a dramatic reduction in the number of serious incidents of poor behaviour this year. The new curriculum also has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour. During the inspection, most pupils were engaged with their learning and were happy to talk about what they have been learning, particularly in science.

Leaders have high expectations for attendance and punctuality and most pupils attend well. There are robust systems in place to record admission and attendance information.

Leaders are working hard to improve the provision for pupils' personal development. A new curriculum for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education has been introduced. Pupils learn about balanced diets and how to be physically and mentally healthy. They enjoy the weekly outdoor adventurous activities where they take part in individual and team challenges. Pupils are respectful of difference and enjoy learning about different cultures and religions. Some of this work is at an early stage and leaders know that there is more to do. For example, they want pupils to experience a wide range of opportunities linked to their interests or talents and to get involved in the wider community.

From the summer term, all pupils will receive impartial careers information that will help them to make decisions about their next steps in education, employment or training. Leaders are keen to find work experience placements or volunteering opportunities for all pupils. They are actively looking for placements for pupils who are ready for this step.

The proprietor body is knowledgeable and experienced. It has ensured that all the independent school standards are met. The proprietor body is compliant with the requirements of schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010 and with the implementation

of statutory guidance on relationship and sex education (RSE) and health education. Staff enjoy working at the school and feel supported and valued. They champion the positive changes at the school since the new headteacher arrived.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding policy includes the most recent statutory guidance and is available as a paper copy on request.

All staff receive training in keeping pupils safe. Staff share any concerns about a pupil's welfare or well-being using well-established systems. This includes daily briefings. Leaders work closely with external professional agencies to ensure that pupils get the support they need.

The proprietor body ensures that recruitment procedures are rigorous. Leaders make all the necessary checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with pupils.

Pupils learn about how to keep themselves safe. This includes when they are online or out in the community. Older pupils understand what makes a safe and healthy relationship.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- The weakest readers do not benefit from a systematic approach to improving their reading skills. There is an inconsistent approach to teaching phonics. This means that pupils at the early stages of learning to read are not supported well enough to catch up quickly to become confident and fluent readers. Leaders should ensure that their chosen phonics programme is implemented systematically and that staff are fully trained in its use.
- In some subjects, including mathematics, plans do not set out well enough the key knowledge pupils should learn and the order that they will learn it. This means that some pupils are not able to build on what they already know and can do. Leaders should ensure that they continue their work to develop the curriculum so that all subject plans make clear what should be taught and when.
- Leaders have not ensured that the assessments of pupils are used well enough to identify and address specific gaps in their learning. This means that for some pupils, weaknesses in knowledge are not addressed as well as they could be. This limits the achievement of some pupils. Leaders should ensure that staff use assessment to inform the next steps for individual pupils more precisely.
- Some aspects of leaders' work to improve the provision for pupils' personal development are at an early stage. Some pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their talents and interests. Other pupils do not have meaningful opportunities to make positive contributions to the school or the wider

community. Leaders should continue with their plans to provide opportunities to broaden pupils' personal development.

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

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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>	140273
<b>DfE registration number</b>	335/6002
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10212797
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	8
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	Cambian Childcare Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Sutherland
<b>Headteacher</b>	Tonia Lewis
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£41,500
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 378043
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.cambiangroup.com/">www.cambiangroup.com/</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:Tonia.Lewis@cambiangroup.com">Tonia.Lewis@cambiangroup.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 to 9 November 2017

## Information about this school

- The school's last full standard inspection was in November 2017, when it was judged to be good and all the independent school standards were met.
- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in the summer term 2021.
- The school is part of the Cambian Group. The company operates similar schools in different parts of the country.
- The school provides education for up to 12 pupils aged between seven and 16. The school caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. There are currently eight pupils on roll, most of whom have an EHC plan.
- At the moment, the school uses four unregistered alternative providers.
- The school does not have a website. Hard copies of policies and other documents are available on request.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors 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.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- During the inspection, inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. Inspectors also met with other staff. The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the proprietor body. The lead inspector toured the school to evaluate compliance with the independent school standards.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, PSHE and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with leaders, looked at curriculum plans and spoke with staff and some pupils about their learning. Inspectors also looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read in class.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and pupils' work in other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation related to the work of the school and scrutinised documents relating to safeguarding.

## **Inspection team**

Jo Evans, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Chris Field

Ofsted Inspector



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