

Inspection of The Mews

Wem Lane, Wem, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY4 5RT

Inspection dates: 7 to 9 February 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Outstanding
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Does the school meet the independent school standards?	Yes
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive at this school. They are extremely well looked after. Leaders and staff are deeply committed to helping pupils succeed. School displays are full of work from both past and present pupils. Everyone values this work and treats it with respect.

Before arriving at The Mews, most pupils have not had positive experiences of school. Some pupils may have significant gaps in their education. This is a school where pupils feel safe and valued. This in turn builds trust and a sense of self-worth. Pupils appreciate this.

Leaders have created a curriculum that fits the needs of the pupils. It is broad and balanced. Staff think carefully about the activities that they choose in order to meet the needs and interests of each pupil. This helps pupils to make progress.

Pupils' personal development comes first. Staff take every opportunity to build positive relationships throughout the day. As a result of this, pupils say that staff listen to them and that there is always an adult that they can talk to if anything is worrying them. Pupils know that staff will deal quickly with bullying if it should ever occur.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that is well suited to pupils' needs. Pupils study mathematics and English along with a range of other subjects, such as food technology, art, science and personal, social and health education (PSHE). In addition to this, staff are always looking for ways that they can develop pupils' life skills, as some of these pupils may soon be moving on to living independently.

Leaders create bespoke curriculum plans to meet the needs of each pupil, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders know what makes each pupil 'tick' and how best to support them in their learning. They are experts in helping pupils to achieve success with their learning, often when pupils initially believe that it is not possible. There has been considerable work carried out on curriculum development, and subject leaders are well supported by the head teacher. However, at this point they are still developing the skills, knowledge and expertise needed to effectively carry out their roles.

Staff are well trained and have the skills needed to work in this environment. They are patient and calm and understand how to adapt the curriculum, often breaking tasks down into small activities. Staff deliver some lessons individually to pupils. These strategies help pupils to access and learn the curriculum well.

Leaders recognise the importance of reading and have ensured that all staff have received phonics training. Staff encourage pupils to read daily. The library is well stocked with a range of texts, including graphic novels and educational magazines.

Leaders also think carefully about what texts they cover in lessons as some may trigger past trauma in pupils. Although reading may still not be a favourite pastime for some, this approach is helping pupils to develop an appreciation of different texts and an enjoyment of reading.

Teachers use assessment well. During lessons, teachers use various methods to help pupils recall what they have learned previously. This helps pupils remember more of their learning long term.

Pupils learn to manage their behaviour and recognise how they are feeling. Staff support pupils with managing their behaviour alongside helping them to learn and remember. Staff handle incidents of disruption well and pupils are usually quickly back on task learning.

Highly effective personal development is at the core of the curriculum. Staff help pupils to be aspirational and consider what might be possible in the future. Each pupil has an individualised PSHE programme that is very carefully planned to address their needs and circumstances. Staff handle sensitive issues and discussions extremely well.

Provision for careers education is strong. Staff take the time to really get to know pupils and help to develop aspirations and broaden horizons. This attention to detail means that pupils get the right information at the right time. This opens doors for future training and employment.

The proprietor body is knowledgeable and experienced. It has ensured that all the independent school standards are met. There are a variety of systems in place for checking the quality of education. Consequently, leaders at all levels know the school very well. Leaders work hard to promote staff well-being. Staff morale is high and staff are proud to work at the school.

Leaders have ensured that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff have the pupils' best interests at heart. They make sure that keeping pupils safe is at the forefront of their work. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. This training provides them with a thorough understanding of their role in keeping pupils safe. Staff are alert to any signs that a pupil needs help and act quickly to provide support when necessary. Leaders are strong advocates for pupils and are tenacious in securing the right support.

Staff help pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe both in the community and online through carefully planned sessions.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Some subject leaders are developing the skills, knowledge and expertise needed to carry out their roles and responsibilities fully. This means that they do not always know fully the impact of their work. Leaders should continue to develop subject leaders so that they can evaluate the impact of the curriculum they lead, ensuring that pupils achieve well.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

School details

Unique reference number	145468
DfE registration number	893/6034
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10254687
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	11 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	4
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	1
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cambian Childcare Ltd
Chair	Chris Strong
Headteacher	Tonia Lewis
Annual fees (day pupils)	£49,246
Telephone number	01948 808670
Website	www.cambiangroup.com
Email address	Tonia.Lewis@cambiangroup.com
Dates of previous inspection	6 to 8 November 2018

Information about this school

- 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 20 pupils aged between 11 and 18. The school mainly caters for pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs. Some pupils may have an education, health and care plan.
- The school uses one alternative provider, which is unregistered.
- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held meetings with the executive head and other leaders.
- The inspector met with representatives from the proprietor body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in mathematics, PSHE and animal management. Inspection activities in these subjects included lesson visits, discussion with staff and pupils, meeting with subject leaders, and work scrutiny. The inspector also observed pupils reading.
- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding arrangements, behaviour and attendance. The inspector also reviewed the school's evaluation of its own performance and the school's development plans.
- The inspector talked to staff about their role in keeping pupils safe.
- The inspector held informal and formal discussions with pupils and observed social times.
- The inspector reviewed responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View, including additional free-text comments. The inspector also took account of responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Emma Gater, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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