

Inspection of Cambian New Elizabethan School

Quarry Bank, Hartlebury DY11 7TE

Inspection dates: 23 to 25 January 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

No

What is it like to attend this school?

Many pupils have positive relationships with staff at this school. When pupils arrive here, staff take time to understand and get to know everyone. Staff do not see pupils' needs as a barrier to success; they set high expectations for what pupils can achieve and where they can move on to.

Pupils usually behave well. Most pupils are calm and listen to their teachers carefully in lessons. Many staff sit with pupils at lunchtime or play outside with them on the school field. However, on occasion, some pupils are not supported well enough to manage their behaviour. This can lead to them being out of class for extended periods of time and missing their learning.

Pupils study a broad range of subjects as part of the school curriculum. Those who need help with their reading receive suitable support to help them catch up. However, the targets for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not always fully met. This can slow their progress.

The school provides different ways for pupils to broaden their horizons beyond the classroom. In the past, pupils have enjoyed camping trips and visits to the theatre. Many pupils particularly enjoy the 'social café' which takes place each week.

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

The school has put in place a broad and ambitious curriculum for pupils to study. In each subject, the school has identified the themes and topics that pupils will learn. For many of these subjects, leaders have carefully sequenced learning so that it is clear what knowledge and skills pupils need to remember. However, leaders recognise there is further work to do to pinpoint the precise knowledge and skills that pupils should know and understand across all subjects.

Many staff have a secure knowledge of the subject they are teaching. They use this knowledge effectively to help pupils understand key ideas. This is particularly successful in science, where staff take time to explain key scientific concepts and break tasks down into small, manageable chunks. In this way, pupils understand what they are doing and make progress in their learning. However, on some occasions, staff do not routinely check whether pupils are secure in their prior learning and where gaps in knowledge may exist. Consequently, they provide work to pupils they do not fully understand. This hinders pupils' ability to complete more complex tasks and the progress that they make.

The school has taken positive steps forward since the last full inspection to improve the provision in reading. Leaders have adopted a commercial scheme to help with the delivery of phonics. All pupils have been assessed in their reading and various interventions have been put in place. For those in the lower phase of the school, there are daily phonics lessons and reading practice. Teachers ensure that the books

pupils are given are well matched to their phase of phonics. For those who fall behind, extra help and support is given so that they can catch up.

All pupils who attend the school have SEND related to autism. Leaders use pupils' education, health and care plans (EHC plan) to create individual learning plans in school. These provide both academic and social, emotional and mental health targets which are reviewed termly. However, pupils' learning plans do not always reflect the specific needs detailed in EHC plans. As a result, this does not enable pupils, particularly those with more complex needs, to make the progress of which they are capable. Additionally, this also leads to some pupils withdrawing from activities and switching off from their learning.

The school provides both personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) and life skills lessons as part of pupils' wider development. Leaders have used a commercial scheme to help set out the core strands that are covered each year. This covers key areas including healthy relationships, staying safe online and fundamental British values. However, the delivery of this curriculum is variable. Some life skills lessons lack a clear focus and do not make links to what pupils learn through the PSHE curriculum. In addition, some pupils are not effectively supported to engage with this work or to see the value of these lessons.

The school has put in place an effective careers programme. Pupils learn about different careers and pathways that are available when they leave school. For older pupils, staff ensure that they undertake visits to local colleges and are aware of potential apprenticeship routes. Pupils in Year 11 and the sixth form benefit from undertaking a work experience placement. As well as this, there are also visits that take place to The Skills Show and online talks from different professionals. Pupils are well prepared to take their next steps in education and/or employment.

The school has been through a period of turbulence with changes in staffing and senior leadership since the previous inspection. While staff appreciate the support for their workload and well-being, some are concerned about the instability in staffing and the impact this has had. The proprietor body has not acted quickly enough to address some of these issues. This has slowed the pace of improvements being made.

The school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Occasionally, safeguarding logs are not updated in a timely way to reflect the actions leaders are taking to keep children safe. Safeguarding records do not always show the steps that have been taken and what contact staff have had with parents or external agencies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Safeguarding logs are not always updated regularly enough to reflect what has been done. This means that in some instances, it is unclear when actions have been taken and how pupils receive help and support in a timely way. The school should ensure that all safeguarding records clearly show the chronological steps being taken to keep pupils safe from harm.
- Learning plans for pupils with SEND do not accurately reflect the full needs of pupils, particularly those with more complex needs. As a result, these pupils are not supported as well as they could be to make gains in their learning. The school should ensure that pupils' planned learning is well matched to meet the objectives set out in their EHC plans so that they can achieve well across the curriculum.
- Staff do not systemically check pupils' learning in some lessons. This means that gaps in knowledge are not picked up swiftly, and some pupils do not fully understand the purpose of what it is they are doing in lessons. The school should ensure that teachers check knowledge and understanding regularly so that they can adapt learning, close gaps in knowledge and help pupils make better progress.
- The curriculum for pupils' wider personal development is not implemented well. Lessons in PSHE and life skills are not sufficiently connected or taught effectively to help pupils develop a good understanding of key topics. The school should ensure that the delivery of the PSHE and life skills curriculum helps strengthen pupils' wider personal development.
- The proprietor body has not ensured that the school has made sufficient progress since its last full inspection. Turbulence in staffing and changes in leadership have slowed the actions that have been taken to improve the school. This has contributed to some of the independent school standards now not being met. The proprietor body should take appropriate steps to ensure that the school is supported to move forward.

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

School details

Unique reference number	117030
DfE registration number	885/6021
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10284422
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	CareTech Community Services Ltd
Chair	Farouq Sheikh
Headteacher	Steve O’Gara
Annual fees (day pupils)	£66,300 to £103,851
Telephone number	01299 250258
Website	www.cambianguroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/autism-schools/new-elizabethan-school/
Email address	info@caretech-uk.com
Date of previous inspection	5 to 7 April 2022

Information about this school

- The school currently has an interim headteacher who has been in post since June 2023.
- Cambian New Elizabethan School is an independent special day school. All pupils on roll have an EHC plan. The school caters mainly for pupils with a diagnosis of autism.
- The school's previous standard inspection took place in April 2022 where it was judged as requires improvement.
- The school's last progress monitoring inspection took place in April 2023. The school was judged to meet all the independent school standards at this inspection.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.

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.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's work.

The school has failed to meet the independent school standards. These are the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with the interim headteacher and the deputy headteachers. They also met with the regional director and the director for education services from CareTech Community Services Ltd.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English and reading, mathematics, science and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to staff, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils first.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school policies, risk

assessments, attendance information and behaviour logs to check compliance with the independent school standards.

- The school's website was checked.

Inspection team

Mark Howes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tim Hill

His Majesty's Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school failed to meet the following independent school standards

Part 1. Quality of education provided

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if-
 - 2(1)(b) the written policy, plans and schemes of work-
 - 2(1)(b)(i) take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an EHC plan; and
- 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(b) fosters in pupils self-motivation, the application of intellectual, physical and creative effort, interest in their work and the ability to think and learn for themselves;
 - 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time;
 - 3(d) shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons;
 - 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;
 - 3(h) utilises effective strategies for managing behaviour and encouraging pupils to act responsibly;

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 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; and

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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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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