

Inspection of Cambian Home Tree School

172 March Road, Friday Bridge, Wisbech, Cambridgeshire PE14 0LP

Inspection dates: 23 to 25 January 2024

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	Good
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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 usually arrive at this school at the later stages of their secondary education and after prolonged periods of disrupted schooling. This is often their first positive or sustained experience of school. Staff take time to get to know each pupil well. Pupils have a positive rapport with adults. Pupils benefit from carefully made decisions involving a range of professionals about how best to manage their individual needs.

Pupils are consulted regularly on school life to ensure they have the best possible experience. They can express their opinions, identity and feelings without judgement. Pupils follow expectations about uniform, manners and work presentation. They are incentivised to attend lessons regularly and understand the consequences of their behaviour choices.

The school's determination for pupils to succeed results in many pupils gaining qualifications that they may not have felt were possible at the outset. Pupils especially enjoy creative subjects such as art and music where their talents are actively encouraged. Some pupils would like more qualifications made available to them so they can access more choice in the next stage of their education.

Pupils participate in trips and visits in subjects such as history and science. Visitors to school include a local historian and artists.

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

The school balances supporting pupils' complex social and emotional needs with the requirement for them to access education. Pupils are given the space to settle into school, within a specific time frame, so that good attendance and learning habits are encouraged from the start.

The school quickly establishes what gaps in missed learning pupils have. They develop individual timetables, therapeutic approaches and bespoke qualification pathways to support pupils to succeed academically. These fit within a curriculum that provides opportunity for pupils to build knowledge systematically. As a result, nearly all pupils leave with qualifications in English language, mathematics, a science and a foundation subject, with a few staying on to take A levels.

Leaders are aware that a few subjects do not yet have a qualification pathway. This limits the qualification options some pupils have to be fully prepared for the next stage of their education or training.

Teachers regularly check on what pupils know and remember so they can fill gaps in knowledge quickly. Pupils are supported well to prepare for exams. However, the feedback pupils receive on how to improve their work is often not sufficiently precise or ambitious enough. This can hinder how securely gaps are filled and some next steps are not always well matched to what pupils are capable of.

Staff ensure that all pupils have access to high-quality texts with rich language. Pupils have regular opportunities to develop reading knowledge and extend their vocabulary. Staff check regularly on how confidently pupils are reading and give them support when needed. As a result, most pupils can read well and any gaps in reading knowledge are soon filled.

Pupils move around the building calmly. They follow instructions and respond well to encouragement. Staff work hard to ensure pupils come to lessons and remain on task. There are daily briefings with parents and carers to maximise school attendance. The behaviour policy is applied consistently and fairly.

Pupils learn about equality, diversity and democracy. Staff teach about relationships, personal safety and mental health in a sensitive and honest manner. This prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.

Pupils develop independent social skills ready for adult life. They have regular outings to the local community. Some pupils have regular volunteer work placements. However, there is not yet a fully cohesive work experience or wider opportunities offer for every eligible pupil. This can hinder a few pupils from being fully prepared for the next stage of their learning.

The proprietor body and governors ensure that the school meets all the independent school standards, including the requirements under schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The building is well maintained and safe. The proprietor body regularly reviews key performance indicators linked to pupils' achievement, attendance, behaviour, safeguarding, finance, staff well-being and health and safety. As a result, leaders are held to account effectively. Leaders also ensure staff have time to complete training and develop best practice.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- In some lessons, the feedback given to pupils on how to improve their learning is not always specific or ambitious enough. This means it is not always clear to pupils how to exactly achieve the next step suggested by their teacher. Leaders need to ensure all staff improve the precision of feedback given to pupils and check pupils have secured this knowledge to a sufficiently high standard before moving on to something new.
- There are a few subjects that do not have qualification pathways, and there are a few pupils who are not accessing timely work experience. This means not all pupils are being fully prepared for the next stage of education or work. Leaders

need to ensure all subjects offer qualification routes and that all eligible pupils access appropriate and relevant work experience in their time at the school.

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	141879
DfE registration number	873/6052
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10267672
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent day school
Age range of pupils	12 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	16
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cambian Group
Chair	Farouq Sheikh
Headteacher	Tawanda Madhlangobe
Annual fees (day pupils)	£54,415
Telephone number	01945 660988
Website	www.cambiangroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/semh-schools/cambian-home-tree-school/
Email address	Tawanda.madhlangobe@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous inspection	12 to 14 February 2019

Information about this school

- The school is an independent day school owned by Cambian Group. The school has oversight from the managing director of Cambian Group, a central team and a regional lead. There is also a school governing board. The regional lead is the chair of the school governing board.
- The school opened in March 2015. This is its third standard inspection. The last standard inspection was in February 2019.
- There have been no material changes since the school opened.
- There was an additional monitoring visit in July 2019, with no concerns raised.
- All pupils who attend this school have significant social, emotional and mental health as their primary special educational need.
- The majority of pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils attend the school from a range of local authorities and care providers.
- A few pupils on roll are currently home tutored by the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has regular access to therapeutic, medical and social care professionals.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the last inspection.

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 education provision.

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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher (who is also the special educational needs coordinator), subject leaders, teachers and support staff.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading and English, mathematics, art and music. For each deep dive, the inspectors spoke to subject

leaders, visited lessons where possible, spoke with pupils, looked at pupils' workbooks and spoke with teachers and support staff.

- The inspectors also looked at a range of pupils' work from across the curriculum.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the representative of the proprietor who is the managing director of Cambian Group. The lead inspector also met the regional lead for Cambian Group, who is responsible for governance of the school on behalf of the proprietor.
- To check compliance with the independent school standards, inspectors spoke to the headteacher, the proprietor representatives, staff and pupils. Inspectors visited lessons and toured the school site.
- The lead inspector reviewed arrangements for those pupils who have home tutoring provided by school staff.
- The lead inspector scrutinised a range of documentation, including the school's own self-evaluation, school improvement plan and governance minutes.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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' interests first.
- The inspectors considered the responses gathered through Ofsted's online survey for parents, Ofsted Parent View. As there were limited responses to Ofsted Parent View, the lead inspector met with the manager of the on-site children's home as a 'corporate parent' and spoke to four parents on the telephone. There were nine responses to the staff surveys. No pupils answered the pupil survey. However, the inspectors spoke to pupils during the inspection and also reviewed written pupil voice, as well as talking to a range of staff.

Inspection team

Sara Boyce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Joanna Pedlow

Ofsted Inspector

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