

Inspection of Chase House School

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

Inspection dates: 27 and 29 February 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	Requires improvement
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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 are well cared for here. Despite the significant challenges that pupils have faced in their lives before joining the school, pupils quickly settle when they get here. They contribute positively to the calm and nurturing environment that is a hallmark of the school.

The care and attention that leaders and staff give to pupils help pupils to gradually overcome their past experiences and re-engage with education. Relationships are at the heart of this work, and a sense of community is clear to see. Pupils build strong positive relationships with their peers and staff during their time here. Pupils value these. They know who to turn to if they have a concern. Pupils are confident that any concerns will be resolved quickly.

Leaders' ambition for pupils is clear. They know that pupils have often, in the past, struggled to communicate their feelings in an appropriate way. They have a deep understanding of pupils' past trauma. Leaders do not use this as an excuse. They set clear expectations for pupils' behaviour and seek to modify the negative behaviours that pupils have previously shown. When pupils misbehave, staff challenge this in a calm, caring way, taking account of pupils' individual needs. Pupils' ability to communicate their feelings, and consequently their behaviour, improves well during their time at the school.

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

Leaders have created a culture here where both academic achievement and personal growth are celebrated. Leaders and staff are committed to ensuring that pupils gain the qualifications and receive the therapeutic care they need to overcome their individual challenges and be successful in their next steps.

All pupils who attend the school have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities associated with their social, emotional, and mental health (SEMH). When pupils join the school, leaders begin to build a clear picture of pupils' starting points, as well as their therapeutic needs. In the main, staff meet these needs well and provide a range of well-thought-out and helpful opportunities to support pupils. However, occasionally, leaders do not build a detailed picture of pupils' needs swiftly enough. Consequently, when pupils first join the school, the support that they receive is not always as tightly focused as it might be. Leaders recognise this and are taking appropriate steps to resolve this.

Leaders have recently redesigned the curriculum. Across most subjects, they have now set out the precise knowledge that they want pupils to learn. Teachers generally deliver this new content well, and pupils make sound progress. For example, in art, pupils are developing a secure knowledge of the process of line drawing, producing ever more complex designs while also learning to evaluate their work with precision. However, the knowledge that pupils should learn has not been set out in enough detail across some subjects. Where this is the case, the things

that pupils learn do not build well enough on what they have already been taught. Additionally, teachers do not consistently provide pupils with activities that are well suited to the intended learning. This is because teachers sometimes lack the subject knowledge needed to adapt the curriculum appropriately. Together, these factors sometimes limit pupils' progress.

Recently, leaders have renewed their focus on pupils' reading ability. The new phonics curriculum is well planned, and staff deliver this curriculum with precision. Consequently, pupils learn to read more fluently and grow into confident readers. Leaders have thoughtfully curated a range of books to complement pupils' therapeutic needs. For example, pupils read stories such as 'Delly Duck' and 'Ruby's Worry' which allow pupils to engage in sensitive but pertinent themes such as adoption and anxiety in a supportive way. This work is helping pupils to develop their sense of self and better understand their past experiences.

The school's work to enhance pupils' social interactions and their wider personal development is a growing strength. There are a broad range of opportunities to support pupils to build confidence and independence within their peer group and the wider community. For example, pupils frequently raise money for a local food bank and host coffee mornings for the local community. The school makes sure that pupils benefit from a wide range of appropriate encounters with the world of work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- Leaders have not set out the precise knowledge they want pupils to learn in some subjects. This means that in some subjects, teachers are at times unclear about precisely what to teach and when. Consequently, pupils' learning does not always build successfully on the things they have been taught before. This sometimes holds pupils back. Leaders should ensure that curriculum planning is equally well developed across all subjects so that the key knowledge to be taught is carefully laid out.
- In a small number of subjects, teachers' subject knowledge is not secure. As a result, they do not always select appropriate activities or deliver subject content with accuracy. This leads to misconceptions and limits the progress that pupils make. Leaders should ensure that they continue to support staff to develop their subject-specific knowledge so that teachers deliver the curriculum with fidelity and precision.
- On admission to the school, the therapeutic interventions that pupils receive are not always as well matched to their specific SEMH needs as they might be. At times, this prolongs the time it takes for some pupils to settle and begin to regulate their emotions effectively. Leaders should continue their work to embed

their intervention programme and develop their understanding of pupils' needs quickly when they join the school so that the school can provide highly focused support to meet these needs.

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	140273
DfE registration number	335/6002
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10299225
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	7 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cambian Childcare Ltd
Chair	Andrew Sutherland
Headteacher	Tonia Lewis
Annual fees (day pupils)	£49,246
Telephone number	01543 378043
Website	www.cambiangroup.com/cambiangroup.aspx
Email address	Tonia.Lewis@cambiangroup.com
Date of previous inspection	29 to 31 March 2022

Information about this school

- The school's last full standard inspection was in March 2022, when it was judged to require improvement and all the independent school standards were met.
- The school is part of the Cambian Childcare 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 SEMH needs. There are currently three pupils on roll, most of whom have an education, health and care plan.
- Presently, the school does not use any alternative provision to provide education for pupils.
- 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.

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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- 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.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher and other senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with the chair of the proprietor body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and personal, social, health and economic education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors met with members of staff and spoke to pupils formally and informally at various points in the inspection.

- Inspectors looked at records and spoke to staff in relation to attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Alexander Laney, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Clarkson

His Majesty's Inspector

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