

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Cambridge School

61 Bryony Rd, White City, London W12 0SP

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 October 2024

Outcome

Cambridge School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Expectations at the school are extremely high, with staff demonstrating an unrelenting ambition for pupils from the moment they join. They want to give pupils every chance to achieve across a broad range of subjects. The school supports learning by using what pupils already know, providing specialist resources to help them focus and meeting their individual needs. Consequently, pupils meet the high expectations the school has for every pupil.

Due to their needs, pupils sometimes find it hard to manage their emotions. When this happens, well-trained staff skilfully support them. When bullying happens, pupils know that adults will deal with any issues immediately and sensitively.

Pupils receive an excellent package of support during their time here. This prepares them extremely well to be able to learn alongside others and live successfully in a family home.

Pupils appreciate being treated as individuals, and staff help them to learn that they are also very much part of a wider community. Getting out into the community helps pupils to develop their independence. For example, they go shopping, canoeing and visit the park. These visits also improve their communication skills. Pupils have opportunities to perform at prestigious venues like the Royal Albert Hall. The impact of such activities is evident in the increased engagement and raised self-esteem of pupils, who take pride in exhibiting their work and performing publicly.

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

Recently, the cohort of pupils attending the school has changed. Now, many more pupils come to the school because of severe emotional, mental health or behavioural issues. In

response, leaders have adapted the approach of the school. This has been successful in increasing the engagement of pupils and reducing the frequency of serious behavioural incidents.

With this changing cohort, leaders realised that they needed to redesign the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. In most subjects, the resulting curriculum is carefully thought out so that learning builds logically over time. Staff help pupils to know and remember more as they move through the school. However, in a few subjects, including mathematics, the identification of important content that pupils should learn is not as clear. This means that, on occasion, pupils do not remember key subject content deeply.

Teachers help pupils to enjoy reading. Pupils read with confidence, accuracy and fluency. They know what it means to be a good reader and why this is important. Pupils routinely use technical vocabulary to help build new skills and knowledge. They can recognise what is good about their work and how it could be improved. This allows them to independently refine their skills as they consider the next steps and longer-term curriculum aims.

Pupils are sensitively prepared for life beyond the security of school. This is because lessons use real-life contexts for learning. Pupils practise independent travel. They develop strategies to cope with potentially challenging situations when out and about.

Pupils achieve qualifications in a broad range of subjects that provide knowledge and skills that help them succeed in college and future employment. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The school works effectively to ensure the highest possible attendance. Staff demonstrate patience, consistency and persistence to re-engage pupils who have been out of school with learning. Collaboration with other agencies, and the involvement of learning mentors, have improved attendance over time. Pupils told inspectors that 'attendance is really important so you can study hard and do your exams'.

The school council and the pupil ambassadors play an important role in improving the school. They understand the importance of representing the whole school. Pupils are strong advocates for the rights of others.

Leaders are sustaining and improving the school's performance across all areas of its work effectively. Their actions demonstrate a commitment to making decisions in the best interests of pupils.

This school is truly a community, where parents' and carers', staff's and pupils' views are listened to and acted on. Staff are immensely proud to work here.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the school's curricular thinking does not make clear what content pupils should learn and when. This limits pupils' deeper subject-specific knowledge and skills in these subjects. The school should ensure that the curriculum is set out in a coherent and well-sequenced way in all subjects.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness May 2015.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs

and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	100382
Local authority	Hammersmith & Fulham
Inspection number	10345644
Type of school	Special
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Harris
Headteacher	Alan Campbell
Website	www.cambridge.lbhf.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Many of the pupils have experienced disruption to their education before joining the school. Many have social, emotional and mental health needs and/or moderate learning difficulties.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- 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 and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior and middle leaders in the school.

Inspectors spoke with members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

- 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including in relation to safeguarding, careers and special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders and staff to understand how workload and well-being are considered in the school.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Francis Gonzalez, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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