

Inspection of Cambian Spring Hill

Palace Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 3HN

Inspection dates: 25 to 27 February 2025

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Sixth-form provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

What is it like to attend this school?

The school prioritises building strong relationships with pupils. It strives to understand pupils and their often complex individual needs. This contributes to a calm learning environment where pupils behave well. Pupils are happy here. Pupils and their families appreciate the ways in which the school supports them to develop, both academically and personally.

All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They benefit from highly personalised teaching approaches. Consequently, many pupils achieve well. The school effectively supports pupils to consider their aspirations for the future. The school helps pupils to identify appropriate college courses and to secure work experience placements. In recent years, all pupils have moved on to further education or employment after leaving the school.

There is an extensive range of opportunities for pupils to try new experiences and to contribute to the local community. These help pupils to develop positive character traits, such as resilience and effective communication skills. For example, through the enterprise curriculum, pupils make high-quality products to sell in local shops. Through the 'student voice', pupils make a tangible difference to the life of the school. For example, they voted to remove the school uniform and decided on an appropriate dress code instead.

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

When pupils join the school, they undertake an induction programme. This helps them to settle into the school and gives staff the opportunity to build relationships and develop a bespoke curriculum for them. The school offers pupils a broad range of subjects to study. The curriculums in most subjects are designed to support pupils to build their knowledge coherently over time. As pupils get older, they have opportunities to study vocational subjects, such as childcare, as well as academic subjects. Staff regularly check what pupils know and remember.

Many pupils have experienced significant periods out of education. Staff skilfully work to reintegrate pupils into full-time education. As a result, pupils' behaviour is calm and settled. Staff provide clear explanations and demonstrate secure subject knowledge of the subjects they teach. However, they do not consistently identify and address gaps in pupils' basic English skills. This impacts on the quality of pupils' written work.

Many pupils can read at an age-appropriate level. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the quality and range of books that are available to pupils. This has had some positive impact on pupils' attitudes to reading. The school does not, however, have a strategic approach to the teaching of reading. This means that reading is not taught as well, or as often, as it could be. Where pupils find reading difficult, they receive support to catch-up. This support, though, is not consistently matched to the gaps in reading knowledge that pupils have.

From Year 9, the school offers pupils frequent independent careers advice. This advice is effective in helping pupils to identify their next steps. Students in the sixth form benefit from strong support with transition to the next stage of education or employment. For example, staff accompany students on visits to colleges and help them complete independent travel training. The school tailors the curriculum in the sixth form to students' individual needs and aspirations.

The way in which the school supports pupils' personal development is exceptional. By working closely with pupils and their families, the school helps pupils to build their confidence and self-belief so that they can achieve their full potential. Qualifications, such as character education and personal development awards, prepare pupils well for life beyond the school. Through these, pupils learn valuable life skills, including how to manage their own money and how to seek medical care.

The curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is well established. Pupils learn about topics such as healthy relationships, knife crime and how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the community. The school organises events and educational visits to help prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils visit different places of worship and mark events such as Black History Month and Remembrance Day.

There are clear lines of accountability between different levels of leadership within the school and the wider organisation. The proprietor has put systems in place to regularly check that the school meets the independent school standards (the standards). It also ensures that the school is compliant with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The proprietor and governors have an accurate view of the school. They fulfil their respective roles effectively and provide support and challenge to school leaders.

Many staff are positive about working at the school. They appreciate leaders' efforts to reduce their workload and support their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school does not have a consistent approach to the teaching of reading. Consequently, the teaching of reading is not as regular, or as effective, as it could be. This impacts on pupils' exposure to different texts and their enjoyment of reading. The school should devise a strategic approach to the teaching of reading and support staff to deliver this consistently.

- The school does not identify and address gaps in pupils' basic English skills, including in reading, quickly enough. This means that pupils repeatedly make the same mistakes, which impacts on the quality of their written work and their ability to read confidently and fluently. The school should support staff with how to identify and address gaps in basic skills so that pupils develop fluency and automaticity in reading and writing.

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	142911
DfE registration number	815/6034
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10342111
Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	8 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	36
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cambian Autism Services Limited
Chair	Farouq Sheikh
Principal	Samantha Price
Annual fees (day pupils)	£106,426 to £134,251
Telephone number	01765 603320
Website	www.cambianguroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/autism-schools/spring-hill-school/
Email address	springhillschool@cambianguroup.com
Dates of previous inspection	19 to 21 October 2021

Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school operates from its site at Palace Road, Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 3HN.
- All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. The school admits pupils with a diagnosis of autism spectrum disorder. Places are commissioned by the local authority in which the pupil lives.
- There are two children's homes on the same site as the school. These do not come under the school's registration and inspectors only inspected the education provision at this school.

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 evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the principal and vice principal as well as representatives of the proprietor and governing boards.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, religious education and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also looked at samples of pupils' work from science. A member of school staff supported pupils during some of their discussions with inspectors.
- 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.
- To check the school's compliance with the independent school standards, an inspector reviewed relevant documents and policies, such as the health and safety policy and the risk assessment policy. An inspector also completed a tour of the school's premises.
- Inspectors reviewed the responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires. They also considered the free-text comments made by parents and carers through Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Philippa Kermotschuk, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Harrington

His Majesty's Inspector

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