

# Cambian Great Dunmow School

Unit 13, Fitch Industrial Estate, Chelmsford Road, Great Dunmow, Essex CM6 1XJ

**Inspection date**

8 October 2024

**Overall outcome**

**The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection**

## Main inspection findings

### Part 1. Quality of education provided

#### *Paragraphs 2(1) to 2(1)(a)*

- At the time of the standard inspection in April 2024, these independent school standards ('standards') were not met. The school had identified what pupils should learn and when. However, there was a lack of clarity in the school's approach to the curriculum. Staff had not received guidance in how to help pupils to build on their prior learning. As a result, the curriculum was not being implemented successfully.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has put in place a well-designed curriculum. This has appropriate breadth and ambition. There are now clear expectations for how staff should apply the curriculum intent. Learning aims are well defined. Learning now has a regular structure of revisiting and building on prior knowledge. To some degree, this helps pupils to develop what they know. For example, pupils use their previous learning to deepen their confidence with negative numbers in mathematics.
- These standards are now met.

#### *Paragraphs 3(c), and 3(e) to 3(g)*

- At the previous inspection, these standards were not met. The school had not provided sufficient training for staff on how to teach the curriculum. This meant staff were not confident in supporting pupils to learn well.
- Staff are now better trained. This has strengthened their pedagogical and subject-specific knowledge. Leaders routinely check how well staff are delivering the curriculum. Pupils now benefit from improved teaching. Staff teach the building blocks pupils need to succeed. Staff plan activities and manage class time appropriately. Sometimes, learning is successful, and pupils do well. For example, pupils in English articulate positive understanding of the context to literary texts.
- At the previous inspection, the school was not using assessment well to identify and address gaps in knowledge. The school has now undertaken more rigorous baseline assessments. It uses these to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge. Staff check thoroughly on pupils' understanding and rectify any misconceptions. This is beginning to resolve

gaps. This work also benefits a small number of pupils who learn remotely due to struggles with their mental health.

- These standards are now met.

#### *Paragraphs 3 to 3(b)*

- These standards relating to the impact of teaching were not met at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils were not making strong progress through the curriculum. The previous inspection identified that staff were not confident supporting reading. Pupils in the early stages of reading did not get the help they needed to develop their fluency. The teaching of phonics had not been systematic or effective enough.
- While the curriculum has improved, this is not secure in all areas. The impact on pupils is not what the school intends. The school knows that much of the curriculum is new. Pupils are still adapting to higher expectations. At times they lose focus easily. While pupils learn some key knowledge, they do not apply this confidently. This means their learning lacks depth.
- The school has reviewed the reading curriculum. It has now put in place a new phonics provision. Some staff have begun to have the training needed to address this. The school has assessed gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge accurately. It has planned carefully how to rectify these. However, sometimes pupils do not engage well with the new approach. The support early readers need is not embedded.

- These standards are still not met.

#### *Paragraphs 3(d), 3(h)*

- The previous inspection showed that staff did not know how to support pupils' individual needs sufficiently well. As a result, some pupils found learning harder than they should.
- The school has reviewed the way it supports pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It has made sure that staff increase their knowledge of SEND. Staff are now better trained in how to understand and respond to pupils' social, emotional and mental health needs. For instance, key workers help pupils understand and manage their emotions. The school accurately identifies and reviews pupils' needs. Leaders have created coherent information for staff in the pupils' 'One Plan'. At the moment, however, this is having mixed success. Staff sometimes do not provide the best support to meet pupils' needs in lessons. This means pupils lose engagement and do not learn successfully.
- These standards are still not met.
- Therefore, some of the standards in this part are still unmet.

### Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils and Part 6. Provision of information

#### *Paragraphs 7 to 7(b), 9 to 9(c), 11, 16 to 16(b), 32(1), and 32(1)(c)*

- There is a vigilant culture of keeping pupils safe. The new leadership has brought considerable safeguarding experience and expertise. The school is very tenacious in ensuring that pupils receive the right help quickly where required. Records of safeguarding cases show that the school liaises often and well with outside agencies. Leaders take care to ensure all aspects of the provision are safe, such as pupils' transport to and from school. Expectations for staff conduct have been clarified and

raised. Staff know how to spot and log concerns. Pupils are safe and happy at the school.

- The school has an appropriate policy and high standards for health and safety. Risk assessments are used rigorously and reviewed frequently. They are woven into the support for pupils' well-being and behaviour. This means the site and provision are safe for pupils.
- There is a suitable and wide-ranging safeguarding policy on the school website.
- These standards were met at the previous inspection and remain met.

#### *Paragraphs 9(a) and 9(c)*

- The school has reviewed its behaviour policy. The school's approach is clear and well-communicated. The school logs incidents carefully and evaluates these. While some aspects of the policy are not at this point seeing the desired effect, the number of behaviour incidents has fallen. For example, there has been a dramatic reduction in the use of restraint.
- These standards were met at the previous inspection and remain met.

#### *Paragraph 9(b)*

- This standard was not met at the time of the previous inspection. Behaviour was disruptive and inappropriate. This was because the school was not meeting pupils' needs effectively.
- The culture of behaviour in the school is still variable. Pupils still do not receive the best support. This can lead to distressed behaviour. Other pupils get frustrated by the lack of calm in the learning environment. Overall, the school is more orderly than it was. For example, there is a calm and positive atmosphere at break times. Pupils praise how the new leadership has provided stability.
- This standard is still unmet.
- Therefore, some of the standards in this part are still unmet.

### Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

#### *Paragraph 26*

- This standard was not met at the previous inspection. The report stated that noise levels had a significantly negative impact on the learning environment.
- The proprietor body has invested in sound proofing. This has reduced noise and echoing from other parts of the building to acceptable levels.
- This standard is now met.

### Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

#### *Paragraphs 34(1) to 34(1)(b)*

- The school is improving. The local authority, the proprietor body, pupils, staff and leaders all agree that provision has been poor in the recent past. This was reflected in the Ofsted report. The proprietor body and leaders have implemented an appropriate action plan. The new leadership has rapidly developed more effective systems and structures.

However, some of these improvements are recent and not yet having their intended impact. There is not a strong culture of positive behaviour and learning for pupils.

- The proprietor body and the school have ensured that staff receive systematic training to improve their skills. Staff praise the quality of professional development and how it has enhanced their careers. In some areas, the desired impact of this training is yet to be seen.
- The proprietor body keeps a close oversight of the school. It recognises that it did not do this well enough in the past. It was not as quick as it should have been to respond to issues in the school. The proprietor now checks comprehensively on provision. This means it has the knowledge it needs to support and challenge the school. While this is the case, the proprietor has not made sure the standards are all consistently met.
- These standards were not met the previous inspection and they remain unmet.

*Paragraph 34(1)(c)*

- As described above, while some aspects are not fully established, the school has significantly developed the level of care and support for pupils.
- This standard was met at the time of the previous inspection. It remains met.
- Some of the requirements set out in this part of the standards remain unmet.

## **Compliance with regulatory requirements**

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

## School details

Unique reference number	149357
DfE registration number	881/6091
Inspection number	10364556

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Other Independent Special School
School status	Independent special school
Age range of pupils	11 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	10
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietor	Cambian Childcare Limited
Chair	Farouq Rashid Sheikh
Headteacher	Carrie-Ann Gibbs
Annual fees (day pupils)	£59,000 to £89,000
Telephone number	01371705623
Website	<a href="https://www.cambianguroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/semh-schools/cambian-great-dunmow-school/">https://www.cambianguroup.com/specialist-education/our-schools/semh-schools/cambian-great-dunmow-school/</a>
Email address	Carrie-ann.gibbs@cambianguroup.com
Date of previous standard inspection	3 October 2023 to 18 April 2024

## Information about this school

- The proprietor body is Cambian Childcare Limited, which is part of the Caretech group of companies. The Caretech group provides a range of services for children nationally, including other registered schools.
- The school was first registered on 11 October 2022. There was a standard inspection of the school which was completed in April 2024. The school was judged to require improvement. The independent school standards were not met.

- The school provides education for pupils with SEND who have an education, health and care plan relating to social, emotional and mental health needs. Places at the school are mostly commissioned by Essex local authority.
- The school currently uses two unregistered providers of alternative provision for a small number of pupils.
- The headteacher was appointed in May 2024. The deputy headteacher was appointed in July 2024.
- There are currently no pupils on roll in key stage 5.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the Department for Education, which is the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous standard inspection which was completed in April 2024.
- This was the school's first additional inspection to monitor progress. The inspection was conducted without notice.
- To check compliance with the independent school standards, the inspector met remotely with a representative of the proprietor body and the executive headteacher. The inspector met on site with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, staff and pupils.
- The inspector looked at a range of curriculum documents, visited lessons, and looked at pupils' work. The inspector looked at the school's policies, including those for behaviour and health and safety. The inspector toured the school premises.
- Following the previous inspection in April 2024, the DfE asked the school to complete an action plan. On 22 July 2024 Ofsted evaluated the action plan as acceptable, if modifications were made. However, the DfE rejected the action plan. The inspector evaluated the proprietor's updated action plan as part of this inspection.

## Inspection team

Charlie Fordham, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector



## **Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements**

### **The school does not meet the following independent school standards**

*Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection*

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 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(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(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.

#### **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.

### **The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards**

#### **Part 1. Quality of education provided**

- 2(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if–
  - 21(1)(a) the proprietor ensures that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, which provides for the matters specified in sub-paragraph (2) is drawn up and implemented effectively
- – 3(c) involves well planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
  - 3(e) demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter

being taught

- 3(f) utilises effectively classroom resources of a good quality, quantity and range
- 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.

## **Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools**

- 26 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that the acoustic conditions and sound insulation of each room or other space are suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein.

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