

<b>Name of School:</b>	Cambridge School
<b>Headteacher/Principal:</b>	Alan Campbell
<b>Hub:</b>	London Special and AP
<b>School phase:</b>	Community secondary special
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	Not applicable

<b>Overall Peer Evaluation Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	Leaders chose not to have estimates.
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	28/02/2024
<b>Overall Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Not applicable
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	27/03/2023
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	Good
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	01/05/2019

## Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising host school leaders and visiting reviewers, agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

**Leadership at all levels** N/A

**Quality of provision and outcomes** N/A

**AND**

**Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs**

**Area of excellence** N/A

**Previously accredited valid areas of excellence** N/A

**Overall peer evaluation estimate** N/A

***The Quality Assurance Review estimates are not equivalent to Ofsted grades. The QA Review uses a different framework to Ofsted and the review is developmental not judgmental.***

## 1. Context and character of the school

Cambridge School has 138 pupils aged between 11 and 16. All pupils have an education, health and care plan for their special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND), or one is in process. Four fifths of the pupils are boys and almost all are disadvantaged. The school is now designated as part of the local authority offer for social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. A third of the school have SEMH as their primary need. The remainder have autism as a primary or secondary need. Pupils travel from 11 different local authorities across the Greater London area.

There have been changes in the leadership team in the last year and the senior team is comprised of the headteacher and three assistant headteachers. The school and the curriculum is organised into two 'pods': 'Pacific' for pupils whose primary SEND need is SEMH and 'Atlantic' for pupils with autism, many of whom also have SEMH as a secondary need.

### 2.1 Leadership at all levels - What went well

- Leaders are ambitious for the continued development of the school. They ensure that the curriculum and the accreditations pupils achieve before they leave prepare them well for the next stage of education and/ or training. For example, Duke of Edinburgh awards and the 'Princes Trust' employability and personal development curriculum and accreditation have recently been implemented.
- Leaders have acted on the EBI from the previous review. They have appointed an assistant headteacher with responsibility for the curriculum and line management of three new core subject leaders. The new English subject lead, for example, planned and delivered an English curriculum day focused on self-expression. The staff and pupils' feedback from this is positive, giving pupils the opportunity to express themselves through speaking, journalling, and drama.
- There are clear responsibilities and lines of accountability at all levels. Coaching is well established in the school for supporting improvements in leadership and teaching. Learning explorations demonstrated several instances of improved practice that were the result of direct coaching.
- All staff understand that 'behaviour is communication' and that secure relationships are the foundation of the school community. The school has

provided training for all staff on nurture, trauma, attachment theory, using the Boxall profile, emotional intelligence and using zones of regulation. This enabled the implementation of the emotional awareness and regulation curriculum. Pupils successfully identify the 'zone' they are in when they arrive and this informs all their friends and staff in the class.

- Senior staff make highly effective use of 'pilots' to try out strategies and test their effectiveness before training staff and implementing more widely. The trial of nurture approaches in one class was successful. It was then implemented in all classes in Pacific pod and is now being rolled out for the rest of the school.
- Staff are well supported through training and career development. There are several examples of teaching assistants pursuing courses to qualify as teachers and previous senior leaders moving on to headship.
- Pupils' leadership is highly valued. Members of the school council said it is important to know what students think. School council members have clear ideas for their future work. One said, 'Ask everyone about the changes they want to see across the school in terms of provision, resources and different needs.'
- Pupil ambassadors make links in the wider community with older people. These conversations support a better understanding of each other. Pupils value these opportunities for teamwork and developing social and conversational skills. They say that staff have provided excellent role models for them to learn these skills.
- Pupils request and organise lunchtime activities; an assistant headteacher coordinates and supports them. This gives pupils excellent opportunities to learn organisational and team work skills. Activities range from 'sumo' techniques to opportunities to work on assignments for BTEC qualifications.

## **2.2 Leadership at all levels - Even better if...**

- ... leaders continued to develop mathematics leadership within the school.
- ... leaders ensured that teachers receive additional training for mathematics teaching.

### 3.1 Quality of provision and outcomes - What went well

- The curriculum is ambitious and the two and three year rolling programmes of themes, around which subjects are planned, focus on preparation for adulthood and so are relevant for the pupils. Pupils achieve accreditations between entry levels and level 2 in core subjects and life and employability skills.
- Teachers work together to share planning so reducing workload, and the agreed common format supports this. This enables skilled higher level teaching assistants to take classes when necessary to minimise changes for pupils.
- Teachers plan work using the assessment criteria so that pupils make effective progress in their learning. In most classes there are high expectations of pupils' achievement. For example, in mathematics lessons, pupils have a good understanding of subject-specific terminology such as mean, median and mode, explaining it and using it appropriately.
- Most teachers plan a sequence of learning so that pupils build their skills securely and understand what they are learning. Pupils in an English lesson devised open questions and interviewed their friends to elicit responses.
- Teachers establish routines and pupils move seamlessly in lessons from one activity to the next, often moving smoothly within the classroom. Teaching assistants frequently predict pupils' needs and adjust situations to enable them to maintain self-regulation. In a physical education lesson, for example, this was done seamlessly with no interruption to learning for other pupils and reintegration of the pupil who became dysregulated.
- Older pupils working toward accreditations in English recall prior learning and how to apply it. For example, pupils explained how the 'power of three' could be used in journalistic writing. They used this to plan articles about subjects that concerned them such as traffic delaying their journeys to school.
- Arts subjects are valued in the curriculum as they give pupils opportunities for art, music and drama. These enable them to express their feelings in a variety of media and work together for specific purposes. In a dance lesson, for example, pupils understanding of moves was supported well by sign and symbols and they successfully learnt the moves.
- Underpinning lessons, and given dedicated time in each class, is staff's excellent understanding of pupils' emotional regulation and effective trauma-informed and restorative practice. This ensures that learning for everyone is

rarely interrupted and there is a calm and purposeful learning ethos across the school.

- Excellent relationships are evident throughout the school. Pupils work together well and encourage and commend each other's work. The executive function curriculum gives pupils the language to articulate their learning and how they learn. Pupils have reflection time for this in lessons.
- Pupils lead learning in lessons, either formally, by presenting information to the class, or informally by supporting their peers when they need clarification of a concept. For example, in a mathematics lesson, a pupil successfully explained to his partner, using several examples, the meaning of 'doubling'.
- Classes regularly present topics in assemblies so developing their wider social skills. A younger Key Stage 3 class presented information about 'Women's History Month'. They presented facts they had found out about individuals, and other pupils in the assembly recognised the individual photographs.

### **3.2 Quality of provision and outcomes - Even better if...**

- ... teachers consistently ensured that learning objectives are clear and understood by pupils.
- ... teachers were given more opportunities to share the best practice in managing the work of teaching assistants within lessons.

### **4.1 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - What went well**

- Pupils receive therapy for specific reasons to support their personal development. Teachers refer pupils to the multi-disciplinary team, led by the speech therapist, and therapies including music and drama are allocated to them.
- A team of learning mentors effectively support individual pupils, particularly if they become dysregulated in any way. The 'think about it' room is a dedicated space for pupils to use when they need to work outside their normal classroom, spend some time reflecting on the effect their emotional reactions have had on others and a space for indoor self-regulatory activities.
- The excellent relationships enable staff to take pre-emptive action with pupils who are not attending. They identify the barriers and work closely with parents

and carers to support pupils return to school. Pupils encourage each other to attend so that the class receives attendance awards in weekly assemblies. There are notable successes with pupils who have previously refused to attend school because of their anxieties, who are now fully participating in learning.

- Pupils are awarded certificates in assembly for specific improvements in behaviour. This supports the whole school community in celebrating these achievements. The zones of regulation and emotional awareness curriculum has resulted in much fewer incidents of poor self-regulation and there are currently no exclusions.
- Staff and pupils receive targeted support from professionals with mental health expertise from the MIND charity or the educational psychologist. There are group debriefing sessions following any critical incidents enabling appropriate support for all involved.

#### **4.2 Quality of provision and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with additional needs - Even better if...**

... leaders and staff continued to implement the nurture and emotional intelligence approaches in Atlantic pod classes.

#### **5. Area of Excellence**

Not submitted for this review

#### **Following the QA Review**

The review report is primarily for the school's internal use to support the school's continuing improvement. However, we encourage you to share the main findings with your hub/hub manager so that they can support your hub's activity planning. Challenge Partners will also collate and analyse report content to create an aggregate picture of what is going on across the sector each year.

For further support following your QA Review, schools can access the School Support Directory; the Challenge Partners online tool that enables schools to connect with other schools in your hub and across the national network of schools.

Schools can also attend Sharing Leading Practice (SLP) events where schools showcase excellent and/or innovative practice. Sharing Leading Practice events allow school leaders with specific improvement needs to visit a school or attend an online webinar hosted by a school, with outstanding provision in that area.

Both the School Support Directory and the Shared Leading Practice events can be accessed via the Challenge Partners website. (<https://www.challengepartners.org/>)

Finally, following the QA Review, schools may find it useful to refer to research such as the EEF toolkit to help inform their approach to tackling the EBIs identified in the report (<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/education-evidence/teaching-learning-toolkit>)