

Inspection of Cambridge Steiner School

Hinton Road, Fulbourn, Cambridgeshire CB21 5DZ

Inspection dates: 26 to 28 April 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Cambridge Steiner School value and respect individuality. Pupils say that being kind to everyone is 'just what we do'. They trust that adults will keep them safe. Pupils say that bullying does not really happen. They say that adults deal with any concerns they may have effectively.

Pupils enjoy a rich, creative and broad curriculum. Their learning is closely linked to the outside environment. From the start of early years, children are immersed in learning that provides a wide range of opportunities in music, song, movement and the natural world. Pupils value the attention given to the creative aspects of learning as well as the academic.

Pupils are well mannered and respectful. They listen to adults and each other. They show enthusiasm for new learning and their studies. Pupils' good behaviour contributes to the school's calm and happy atmosphere.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are given well-thought-out support to access the curriculum.

Pupils learn about democracy and different faiths and cultures. They articulate their views clearly, sensitively and confidently.

Parents and carers say that it is a school where their children thrive and can be 'who they are'.

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

The proprietor and school leaders have made significant improvements in provision since the previous inspection. They now ensure that they consistently meet the independent school standards. They have improved the quality of education, and they have strengthened leadership capacity across the school.

Leaders have developed a curriculum that is creative, rich and inclusive. Leaders have planned this curriculum in detail. Teachers are well trained and deliver learning expertly. They reinforce important knowledge and vocabulary as pupils learn. They check pupils' understanding routinely, so that they can adapt learning to pupils' individual needs. There is a shared understanding between adults about what and how pupils will learn. All pupils, including those with SEND, learn well in a wide range of subjects.

As pupils get older, they develop skills and comprehensive knowledge. Pupils understand how their learning connects together. For example, in lessons where young children are taught to prepare and cook food, they are able to explain where their ingredients have come from, and the importance of using equipment safely.

Communication (language, speaking and listening) is at the centre of the school's curriculum. In early years, adults model language clearly and well. They take every opportunity to help children learn and practise new words. Children develop their vocabulary through a range of well-thought-out activities, such as listening to stories and singing songs. Children are able to engage in conversations from an early age and learn important letter sounds in an appropriate order ready for reading. Children develop strong language skills from the start.

Pupils develop a love of reading. Pupils are taught how to understand the detail and nuances within a text. They learn how writers use language to convey meaning. Most learn to read with confidence and fluency. A very small number of pupils do not always receive the precise support they need to develop their reading further. This is hindering a few pupils from achieving as well as they could.

Pupils learn about and celebrate diversity. Pupils develop a mature knowledge of different faiths, lifestyles and cultures, and about the importance of tolerance and acceptance. Pupils consider important international debates, such as on sustainability and climate change. Leaders reinforce the importance of healthy living effectively, mainly through the school's outdoor learning.

Pupils receive suitable careers guidance. Leaders have further developed a programme of careers advice and guidance to be delivered next term, when the first cohort of pupils move into older year groups.

Parents are hugely positive about what the school provides for their children. Staff value leaders' support and enjoy working at the school.

Leaders and trustees have a secure understanding of how to consistently meet the independent school standards. They are clear about the main priorities for improving the quality of education. This includes developing the reading curriculum further.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture within the school. Leaders are vigilant and know pupils and families well. Pupils are taught about online safety and know how to protect themselves when online.

Any concerns that staff have about pupils are appropriately recorded and followed up swiftly. Staff have received the latest safeguarding training and are knowledgeable about local contextual issues.

All checks on staff, visitors and contractors are thorough and appropriate.

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

- There is a clear plan for the teaching of reading across the school. In a few instances, adults have not identified pupils who would benefit from more precise support with reading. Leaders need to make sure that they identify where a few pupils need this support, so that they can read fluently as quickly as possible.

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.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	131937
DfE registration number	873/6029
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10216820
Type of school	Other independent school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	2 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Proprietor	Trustees of Cambridge Steiner School Project
Chair	Joel Chalfen
Headteacher	Sarah Fox
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,257 to 10,350
Telephone number	01223 882727
Website	www.cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk
Email address	admin@cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	21 to 23 May 2019

Information about this school

- The school follows the philosophy and methodology of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.
- The legal proprietor of the school is the board of trustees of the Cambridge Steiner School Project. The board of trustees also provides governance for the school.
- The upper school opened in 2021 and provides education for pupils aged from 14 to 16. It currently has fewer than five pupils.
- The school has provision for two-year-old children.

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.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the deputy headteacher, the chair of the proprietor body, the school business manager, the special educational needs and/or disabilities coordinator, designated safeguarding leads, and teachers. The lead inspector held a meeting with two members of the board of trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- Inspectors took account of a wide range of information, including the school's improvement plans and records of safeguarding concerns, school policies, and documents and records relating to safeguarding, including the single central record.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Inspectors also reviewed attendance and other information provided by school leaders.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents expressed in 62 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, and 49 free-text responses. An inspector spoke with several parents at the beginning of the second day of the inspection.
- The subjects covered in depth as part of this inspection were geography, mathematics, reading and science. In each subject, inspectors checked and analysed curriculum documentation, and spoke with subject leaders, teachers and pupils. Inspectors visited lessons and looked at pupils' work.

Inspection team

Cindy Impey, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Lucas

Her Majesty's Inspector

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