



SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE

INSPECTION REPORT FOR CAMBRIDGE STEINER SCHOOL

DfE No: 873/6029

The key inspection judgements for this school are:

The quality of education	Good	2
Pupils' personal development	Outstanding	1
Safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety	Outstanding	1
Leadership, management and governance	Good	2
Effectiveness of the Early Years' provision	Outstanding	1

Compliance with the Independent School Standards:

The school meets the regulatory requirements of schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Compliance with the Equality Act 2010:

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

Compliance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage:

The school meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Date of inspection: 19-20 June 2018

SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Cambridge Steiner School is a thriving and harmonious community which exemplifies many of the best aspects of Steiner Waldorf education. The school meets all the independent schools standards and the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) requirements. The overall effectiveness of provision in the kindergarten, including for children in the EYFS and for five and six year-olds, is outstanding and gives children an excellent start to their education. The quality of education provided in the Lower School is good. Learning and achievement are good, with pupils of all abilities and ages, including those with English as an additional language (EAL), making good progress. The pupils are enthusiastic learners and classes are noticeable for the intense concentration pupils give to their work. They are able to solve problems, think and learn independently, and have good speaking, listening and negotiating skills. Nevertheless the most able, gifted and talented pupils are not always fully challenged by some of the learning tasks that they undertake. Teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. Marking and assessment are highly effective in English and mathematics but less so in other subjects where criteria to evaluate and track progress are not so clearly defined. The quality of the curriculum is outstanding and gives pupils a wide and varied educational experience. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and is strongly supported by the Steiner educational philosophy which permeates the life of the school. Provision for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety is outstanding. The school has established a strong culture of vigilance and pupils say they feel safe and secure in the school. Leadership, management and governance are good, with the school recognising accurately its own strengths and areas for development. Leaders, managers and trustees show a clear commitment to the school and its future development, and a determination to fulfil its capacity to improve further.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Whilst not required by the regulations, the proprietor should:

- ensure that the most able, gifted and talented pupils are always fully challenged by the learning tasks they undertake; and
- define clearly the criteria to evaluate and track progress in order to better inform marking and assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics.

SECTION B: INFORMATION

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION:

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. It follows the inspection framework agreed by SIS and the Department for Education (DfE).

In reaching their judgements, the inspectors observed nine lessons in the Lower School and on-going sessions in the kindergartens. They examined samples of pupils' work and observed the life of the school including at break and lunchtimes. They scrutinised the school's documentation, records and website. Inspectors held discussions with the senior leadership team, managers, pupils, staff and trustees. They took account of the views of 61 parents through the completion of questionnaires and spoke to pupils to seek their views about the school. The inspectors were:

Reporting Inspector:	Peter Jones
Team Inspectors:	Ted Cohn Jane Melbourne
Steiner Community Consultant:	Sally Jenkinson

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:

Cambridge Steiner School is part of the Cambridge Steiner School Project. It was founded in 1993 and moved to its present site, a former special school, in 2007. The school currently has 110 boys and girls on roll, aged two to 13. There are 68 full-time and 42 part-time pupils distributed between five classes in the Lower School and four in the kindergarten. The school has 39 boys and 36 girls of compulsory school age; two of whom have home-school agreements and attend part-time. 13 pupils are identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), but none of these has an education or health care plan. Five pupils are identified as being able, gifted and/or talented. The number of pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is high at 49, and reflects the international families joining the school community whilst employed at Cambridge University and international companies in the area. Thirty-five children are aged under five, of whom 29 attend part-time and six attend full time. The 'Little Kindergarten' for children aged two to three years operates in the morning. The three mixed-age kindergarten classes cater for children aged from three to six years and offer a full day. There are 15 three-year-olds and 11 four-year-olds who receive government nursery education funding. Pupils up to the age of five years follow the EYFS curriculum with modifications and disapplications agreed with the DfE. The school follows the Steiner Waldorf curriculum which emphasises the development of the whole child intellectually, emotionally and socially.

The school uses the Steiner Waldorf system of naming classes and these names are used throughout the report. Their corresponding national curriculum years are shown below.

Steiner Class Name	National Curriculum Year
Kindergartens	Nursery, Reception, Y 1
Class 1 (Lower School))	Year 2
Class 2 (Lower School)	Year 3
Class 3 (Lower School)	Year 4
Class 4 (Lower School)	Year 5
Class 5 (Lower School)	Year 6
Class 6 (Lower School)	Year 7
Class 7 (Lower School)	Year 8
Class 8 (Lower School)	Year 9
Class 9 (Upper School)	Year 10
Class 10(Upper School)	Year 11
Class 11(Upper School)	Year 12

The school's last full inspection was in February 2015 when its registered age range was 3-11 years. Since then, the provision for two to three year-olds has been assimilated into the kindergarten, and the school's registered age range has been extended to take pupils aged up to 14 years. A material change inspection was conducted by SIS in 2016.

SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

Pupils' learning and achievement

Learning and achievement are good. Pupils of all abilities and ages make good progress in their learning as they move through the school. They sustain their enthusiasm for learning throughout the school and listen intently to their teachers. From an early age they develop excellent work habits. They work on individual tasks in the quiet stillness of intense concentration and collaborate very well in problem-solving tasks, often demonstrating high quality speaking, listening and negotiating skills. They move from one activity to the next with minimum fuss, so the pace of learning does not slow. The five to six- year-olds in the kindergarten are well prepared for entry into the Lower School and are already developing learning habits and skills which provide a very secure foundation on which to build. The achievement of pupils is good. From an early age, pupils, including those with EAL, make rapid progress in English, so that they quickly become confident readers and writers. They also make rapid progress in mathematics, supported by the way in which they learn their multiplication tables early. Achievement higher up the school continues to build well on the secure foundations. The progress and achievement of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is always good and often excellent. Almost all pupils make consistently good progress, but occasionally the very small group of the most able, gifted and talented pupils are not fully challenged by some of the learning tasks that they undertake. The achievement of all pupils in other areas of the curriculum, such as science, history and geography, is also good. The school has great strengths in the practical, aesthetic and creative areas, where music and drama are strong and art is an outstanding area of learning and achievement. The quality of the outdoor education is most effective in helping pupils to learn and achieve in areas of practical and life experience.

The quality of teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. It has improved since the last inspection and is now consistently good, with a few examples of excellent teaching. Teachers are well-qualified, enthusiastic and bring to their teaching an easy authority. Lesson planning is now of good quality and has improved significantly since the last inspection. It is closely linked to long, medium and short-term curricular planning through delivery of both the Main Lesson and subject lessons. The planning is particularly good in addressing the learning needs of pupils with SEND and the small number of pupils in need of English as an Additional Language (EAL) support, enabling them to make rapid progress. The lesson planning does not always fully challenge the small group of most able, gifted and talented pupils as well as their peers. Teachers provide good explanations, which often catch the interest of pupils. They use questioning well to explore ideas and consolidate understanding and manage time in lessons effectively, so that a good pace of learning is sustained. Working closely with teaching assistants, they move around groups and individuals quickly as they work, providing helpful guidance and support. Lessons are very well organised

and managed, so that transitions from one activity to the next are seamless and the pace of learning is sustained over sometimes long periods of time. Well-structured group work and variety in lesson activities engender in pupils great enthusiasm for what they do and a strong desire to do well. It helps develop their ability to think and learn for themselves. Small group discussion and presentations make classrooms a rich oral environment in which pupils' speaking and listening skills thrive. Teaching is well supported by good resources which have a positive impact on learning and achievement. For example, high quality paints and crayons add significantly to the quality of pupils' experience and achievement in art lessons.

Marking and assessment are good and often excellent in English and mathematics, where marking is regular, constructive and diagnostic, and sets helpful targets for pupils to aim for. The very clear subject criteria in English and mathematics help to guide marking and assessment and make them highly effective. Marking and assessment in other subjects are always encouraging and often helpfully diagnostic, but they are less effective in helping pupils to improve their work because the subject criteria to identify and track progress are not so well developed.

The quality of the curriculum

The quality of the curriculum, including for pupils aged five to six in the kindergarten, is outstanding. It covers well all the subject areas required by the independent school standards and provides a very rich and varied range of educational experiences for the pupils. It is particularly strong in human and social, linguistic, practical, aesthetic and creative areas, and is enhanced by the recently introduced outdoor classroom curriculum which uses woodland provision for woodcraft work and study visits. The curriculum incorporates a problem-solving approach to learning, focusing on the 'how and why questions', rather than just the acquisition of knowledge. This has a positive impact on extending and developing pupils' thinking skills. Curriculum planning makes excellent use of the materials provided by the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship to create detailed long, medium and short-term planning documents. There are clear links between Main Lessons and subject specific lessons, particularly in the areas of English and mathematics. The planning documents provide an excellent framework for teachers' work, facilitating consistency of practice and enabling senior managers and the faculty of teachers to monitor the quality of teaching and learning effectively. Planning for pupils with SEND and EAL combines detailed and accurate diagnostic assessment with highly effective guidance and support, helping to ensure that these pupils make consistently good progress. Planning for higher ability pupils is clear and appropriate, but it does not always give guidance about how to fully extend the small number of very able, gifted and talented pupils in the school. The pupils' educational and personal experience is extended significantly by the wide range of visits and trips that the school organises in this country and overseas.

2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The personal development of all pupils, including those in the kindergarten aged five to rising six, is outstanding. Pupils develop into mature, courteous young people with a growing awareness of social and moral values, reflecting the expectations of the school and the ethos of Steiner education. They have a strong sense of self-esteem, self-confidence and self-knowledge. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is integral to its curriculum and ethos and is of excellent quality. Ethical, moral and social values become part of the intrinsic experience of pupils through both the excellent models of courtesy, gentle firmness and kindness of their teachers and the content of the Steiner curriculum. Teachers use stories and associated activities with moral and ethical content very effectively to promote personal development and help pupils to know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils know they must take responsibility for their own behaviour and be courteous, respectful and kind to other pupils, so that bullying is rare. As they move up the school, pupils take on informal responsibilities, such as helping and supporting younger pupils in the playground and around the school, including on occasion mentoring them, playing with them and teaching and guiding them. More formally, they help with the preparation of major school events such as the Harvest of Work, take responsibility for various stalls at school fundraising events, and organise a refugee fund-raising circus skills event. Pupils also organise and manage the school council, which is concerned with improving school life and contributing to the development of the school. Pupils say that the council is treated as an important forum to express their views, raise issues of concern and influence the development of the school.

Pupils come from many different faiths, backgrounds and cultural traditions and this is used very well as a resource for learning and to celebrate the diversity in the school community, modern British society and the wider world. The school ensures that pupils are aware of and celebrate the great Christian festivals and those of other major religions. Parents come into school to share festivals from their own religious traditions with the pupils. The school holds an annual multicultural festival to celebrate diversity. Pupils are well informed about key public institutions and services in England through studies in history, geography and personal, social, health and economic education (PSHEE). The school brings in key figures from local services including police and fire officers to speak to pupils. The school is actively involved in local community ventures, such as the local Wildlife Trust, the Fulbourn Forum for Community Action and Fulbourn Arts. Pupils participate in fundraising for charities, sing carols for elderly residents in a local care home and help in local environmental improvement projects. To meet the needs of older pupils the school has introduced aspects of economic education and careers education and guidance to start pupils thinking about their future lives and possible opportunities. The school is very careful to ensure that partisan political views have no place in any of its activities. The values of the school and of the wider Steiner education community strongly emphasise the importance of democracy, the law, individual liberty and mutual respect for different faiths and beliefs. These values provide an excellent bulwark against any form of extremism and represent the best of British values.

3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY

The quality of safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety throughout the school, including kindergarten pupils aged five to six, is outstanding. Safeguarding is at the heart of the school and there is a strong culture of vigilance. Careful attention to detail ensures that safeguarding and child protection requirements are met in full. As a result of meticulous work by school administrators, all safeguarding policies, documentation, training and procedures have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State, are up to date and are regularly reviewed. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has excellent knowledge and understanding of her role and discharges it to good effect. She maintains regular contact with local authorities with regard to any safeguarding and child protection concerns. She ensures that staff are regularly trained and understand their duties in relation to safeguarding, e-safety, extremism and radicalisation. The school provides a secure environment and pupils say they feel safe and well cared for. Policies on behaviour, discipline and sanctions are well integrated and play an effective part in guiding and ensuring pupils' very good behaviour. Pupils report that bullying and poor behaviour are rare but that the school deals quickly and effectively with any incidents that occur. Staff work hard to maintain the supportive and friendly ethos of the school and to ensure the mental health and well-being of their pupils. As a result, pupils are positive and outward looking, have a good understanding of the wider world and are resilient to negative influences.

Although the use of information technology and computers is not part of the Lower School Steiner curriculum, the school has worked hard to provide e-safety training for staff, pupils, and parents and to alert them to the potential dangers presented by the internet, mobile technology and social networking sites. The pupils say that there are always adults who they can talk to if they have concerns or worries. Strategies to encourage healthy life styles are a key element of Steiner education and are very well established in the school. Pupils learn about the importance of a healthy diet and enjoy appetising and healthy meals in school which are prepared by qualified staff using organic food from local sources. Pupils particularly enjoy and benefit from the focus on outdoor education which gives them regular activity and fresh air.

There are suitable policies and well organised procedures for securing pupils' health and safety, including for first aid and fire safety. Pupils are well supervised throughout the school site, including the outdoor play areas. Thorough, regular assessments are carried out to minimise risk for pupils in school, including outdoor lessons, and on out of school visits. The admissions and attendance registers meet requirements.

The school has ensured that all the required checks on the suitability of staff and trustees are carried out and recorded appropriately. A well-organised single central register of appointments is supported by individual staff records which verify its accuracy.

4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

The quality and effectiveness of leadership and management throughout the school are good. The ethos of the school community exemplifies many of the best aspects of Steiner Waldorf education and has a positive influence on the work of leaders, managers and trustees. A workable and realistic framework for leadership and management is in place which draws on the experience and expertise of senior teachers, administrators and trustees as well as advice and guidance from the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship. The well-established management systems enable the school to function efficiently and ensure that the independent school standards are met consistently. Recent administrative staff changes have been managed well and have ensured continuity in the smooth running of the school. There is now an established pattern of regular meetings for staff, including the business management team comprising administrators and senior teachers, teachers' meetings, kindergarten development meetings, whole staff meetings and trustee meetings. The school is developing appropriate and effective systems of line management for all staff. Pupils are able to contribute to the management of their school through regular school council meetings, and parents are consulted regularly. Leaders, managers and trustees know the school's strengths and weaknesses, and their self-evaluation produced in preparation for the inspection was incisive and accurate. The school improvement plan identifies strengths as well as areas for improvement in teaching and assessment. Recommendations from the last inspection have been addressed effectively, bringing improvements to the quality of teaching, planning and marking, although the school is aware that there is still scope for the development of clearer learning targets in some subject areas. The management of safeguarding, including in the kindergarten, has emerged as a particular strength. The DSL, administrators and teachers have worked hard to fulfil their responsibilities in this aspect of provision, and actively promote the pupils' well-being. The school provides helpful reports to parents and meets the standards for the provision of information. There is an established procedure for the handling of complaints. The school's premises and accommodation are fit for purpose and are safely maintained, with classrooms which are well lit and ventilated. Shower facilities are provided for pupils over the age of eleven at the local sports facility where physical education lessons are taught.

Governance

The quality of governance is good. The recently appointed chair of trustees and his board of trustees have collaborated in a timely and effective way with leaders and managers to identify accurately the short term needs and medium and long term goals of the school. Trustees meet regularly and have provided suitable challenge and given good support to enable the school to consistently meet the independent schools standards and the statutory framework for the EYFS. Trustees have justifiable confidence in the capacity of the school to continue to improve.

5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS' PROVISION

The effectiveness of the Early Years' provision is outstanding. Leadership of the EYFS has continued to improve since the last inspection and is outstanding. The

transition of the registered provision for the two to three-year olds ('Little Kindergarten') into an integral part of the whole kindergarten has been seamless, thus enabling the planning and provision across all ages to become increasingly consistent. Staff adhere diligently to the insightful school improvement plan incorporating Early Years provision. This has resulted in the recommendations from previous inspections being swiftly addressed and improvement in the quality of the provision. Arrangements for assessing staff performance are well established and inform the direction of their support, mentoring and professional development. The quality of the Early Years provision is regularly evaluated. This ensures high standards of provision and of realistic, but ambitious, expectations for what children can achieve. The curriculum has suitable breadth and depth and is highly relevant to the interests and needs of the children. Staff plan and manage the curriculum effectively, with individual learning programmes in place for each child resulting in them achieving well and making outstanding progress. The care needs of the two to three-year-olds are also exceptionally well considered. The school promotes equality and diversity well. It tackles bullying and discrimination by having highly effective policies and procedures in place which are closely adhered to. Rigorous checks are made to ensure all of the requirements of the EYFS are met, taking account of the exemptions in literacy, mathematics and assessment which have been authorised in line with Steiner philosophy. Policies and procedures for safeguarding fulfil requirements and staff have up-to-date safeguarding and paediatric first aid training. Staff follow up actively any safeguarding concerns.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. Staff expectations are high and teachers adapt activities appropriately to account for the range of ages and abilities in each class. For example, craft exercises, such as sewing, weaving or whittling wood, are usefully adapted for all children to match their skill levels. Staff know the children well and continually make informal observations to secure their immediate curriculum planning. Staff meet regularly to discuss individual children and their progress. They are keen to ensure that meeting the needs of a particular child does not interfere with the rhythm of the session for other children. Teachers interweave skilfully the Statutory Framework for the EYFS into the Steiner Waldorf philosophy and curriculum. Excellent attention is given to the prime and specific areas of learning. Baseline assessments, which focus on children's social, communication and physical skills shortly after entry are rigorous and ensure the children get off to a great start in their education. Individual learning plans identify children's next steps and the focus for the next week's learning. Formal assessments are completed regularly and comply with statutory requirements. Challenge is adapted to meet the child's needs. Staff are intuitive and perceptive where children are not reaching the required developmental stages. School leaders have rightly identified the need to better ensure that the quality of documentation, including the assessment of children's achievement and progress, across the EYFS is completed in a timely fashion and is of a consistently high standard. This is particularly important as the school expands or undergoes any future organisational change.

Children are supported well and are keen and interested to learn, becoming highly involved in their work and play. The transition to the next stage of their education is well considered and flexible to account for children's readiness for moving on.

Work with parents and carers continues to be a strength of the school. Parents are invited to provide information about their child and staff meet regularly with them to update them on their child's development and progress. They are also involved closely in settling their children and preparing for transition, and this has a positive impact on each child.

Children's personal development is outstanding. They become confident learners and develop an excellent sense of self-awareness. They enjoy their learning and increase in independence taking their roles and responsibilities seriously. Older kindergarten children support each other, including their younger peers, extremely well. The induction procedures and sensitivity of Early Years' staff ensures that children are emotionally secure, particularly in the 'Little Kindergarten'. Children are knowledgeable about the school's guidelines for their behaviour and conduct and are happy to share their knowledge with newcomers. Staff manage children who struggle with their behaviour from time to time highly effectively, helping these children to self-regulate. Children understand how to keep themselves safe as staff continue to be exemplary role models in this regard. School policies effectively underpin children's knowledge about how to keep themselves safe when using information technology. Staff encourage healthy life styles through an outstanding outdoor curriculum which takes advantage of learning and physical challenge in the nearby woodland. Children eat healthily and understand the importance of this.

Outcomes for children are outstanding. Staff gather information with care, beginning with contact with each child's family and any outside agencies prior to entry. Staff are quick to note if a child's progress falls below expectation. They use the school SENCO to help focus individual targets and gain external support where necessary. Children who speak English as an additional language are gaining the skills they need to communicate effectively. Children who have any additional needs such as speech difficulties are supported extremely well to make substantial and sustained progress through careful monitoring and well targeted support. By the time they leave kindergarten, children are highly effective communicators, listening attentively and following instructions. They concentrate for sustained periods and are able to hold mature conversations. Children show good control and co-ordination, for example when balancing on the large wooden blocks or when climbing trees or over gates. They form strong relationships with adults and within their peer groups. The high-quality provision ensures that children in the Early Years achieve well and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education, including in their reading and writing readiness, and in their early understanding of number.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Name of school:	Cambridge Steiner School			
Address of school:	Hinton Road, Fulbourn, Cambridge, CB21 5DZ			
Telephone number:	01223 882727			
Email address:	admin@cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk			
Web address	www.cambridge-steiner-school.co.uk			
Proprietor:	Cambridge Steiner School Project (CSSP)			
Chair of Trustees	Joel Chalfen			
Faculty Business Team:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicola Conlin (Chair) - Interim School Manager, SENDCO and Designated Safeguarding Lead • David van Marle - Chair of Faculty Pedagogical Meeting and Senior Teacher for Lower School • Jeanette Cope – Early Years Manager • Rebecca Mitchell – Admissions, SWSF rep, Siset Assistant to the FBT - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Goldie-Scott - HR/Administrator 			
DfE Number	873/6029			
Type of school	Independent school			
Annual fees	Up to £7,290			
Age range of pupils	Currently 2-13 years, extending to age 14 in September 2018			
Gender of pupils	Male and female			
Total number on roll	full-time	68	part-time	42
Number of children under-5	Boys:	17	Girls:	18
Number of compulsory school age pupils	Boys:	39	Girls:	36
Pupils with an education or health care plan	Boys:	0	Girls:	0
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	Boys:	26	Girls:	23
Type of inspection	Section 109(3) of the Education and Skills Act 2008			

This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, and members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship or Cognita group. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: www.schoolinspectionsservice.co.uk.