



British Schools Overseas School inspection report

Cambridge House Community College

**Inspection dates
Lead inspector**

**6 and 7 November 2012
Brian Oppenheim**

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by five inspectors. Two were from Cambridge Education's British Schools Overseas Inspectorate and Ofsted accredited inspectors, and the National Association of British Schools in Spain (NABSS) approved three.

The inspectors visited 51 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at data on pupils' attainment over the past three years, at schemes of work, policies, the school improvement plan and the school's self-review.

The inspection team:

| | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Brian Oppenheim | Lead inspector, Cambridge Education |
| Jan Lomas | Team inspector, Cambridge Education |
| James Shallcross | Team inspector, NABSS |
| Adrian Massam | Team inspector, NABSS |
| Adele Stanford | Team inspector, NABSS |

Inspectors use the Department for Education standards for the inspection of British schools overseas aligned with the NABSS accreditation criteria. The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's owners on the overall effectiveness of the school and the standard of education it provides. Cambridge Education reports to the Department for Education (DfE) on the extent to which schools meet the relevant standards for British schools overseas as follows:

- the quality of education provided by the school (curriculum, teaching and assessment)
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- the welfare, health and safety of the pupils
- the suitability of the proprietor and staff
- the premises and accommodation
- the provision of information for parents, carers and others
- the school's procedures for handling complaints
- leadership and management of the school.

Information about the school

Cambridge House was founded in 1986 in a small country house with just 10 three-year-old children. Since then, the school has moved to purpose built accommodation and the number of pupils has grown to 1235. The accommodation includes purpose built facilities for art, science, physical education and information and communication technology (ICT).

The great majority of pupils come from professional families working in the educational or medical sectors. Most of the pupils are trilingual and stay with the school from the age of three until 18.

Over 97% of teaching staff are British and qualified in the UK. Of these, over 30% have had experience in the UK within the past five years. All pupils follow the English National Curriculum leading to U.K. based courses and qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. The school operates in English. Links with UK based training organisations enables staff to develop their professional practice.

Cambridge House has several links with schools and organisations in the UK. There are regular school trips to the UK for pupils. The school participates with the International Award and the Sports Leaders Award.

Overall effectiveness

Cambridge House is a good school with the capacity to improve further. Some aspects, such as pupils' attitudes and relationships, are outstanding. The quality of education is good overall but stronger in secondary and the sixth form than lower down the school. The school teaches the National Curriculum for England together with the requirements of the Spanish Ministry of Education. As a result, it provides pupils with an experience that is British in nature. Pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding effectively, enabling them to move to UK or Spanish universities when they leave.

Children start school with limited English and although they start well their progress is not as good as it could be in the primary classes. However, pupils make good progress in the secondary school so that at the end of Key Stage 4 they achieve standards that are above and well above the average for England. In 2012, 95% of pupils achieved five or more IGCSE passes at grades A* - C.

Teaching is generally good, although there is still too much that is only satisfactory especially in the primary school. Nevertheless, pupils whatever their background make good progress from the time they start to the time they leave school and achieve well. By the time they leave school, boys' and girls' achievement is similar although at the end of Key Stage 2, girls do substantially better in English. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities that helps to extend pupils' learning. Opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are strong. As a result, pupils' personal development is excellent. The school is led and managed well and there is a determined commitment to ensure pupils' care and welfare. Self-evaluation has developed well although the use of data to understand progress is relatively underdeveloped.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all the requirements for British schools overseas as laid down by the UK Department for Education. The school is successful in promoting a British education for its pupils through a range of strategies, for example using the English language for lessons, visits to the UK and a partnership with Nottingham University to provide a programme of professional development for teachers.

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development:

- Improve teaching and learning so that it is consistently good by:
 - providing pupils with more challenging work that is better matched to their needs and abilities
 - using questioning more systematically to check pupils' understanding
 - sharing the good practice from across the school
 - focusing lesson plans on learning rather than teaching, emphasising what pupils are to learn rather than the tasks they are to do
 - developing planned outdoor activities in the nursery.
- Improve the use of data to understand and track pupils' progress, evaluate the impact of initiatives on achievement and help to identify improvement priorities.
- Continue to develop the focus the work of leaders on raising the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - implementing the proposed monitoring and support programme for teaching
 - involving middle leaders in lesson observation
 - ensuring that all teachers understand the characteristics of good and outstanding teaching and learning.

The quality of education provided by the school

The curriculum

The curriculum at all key stages and in the sixth form is broad, balanced and responsive to the needs of pupils. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the curriculum is well structured and, for example, the development of children's language skills is supported effectively. In the nursery the outside area is not used for learning and the lack of planned outdoor activities in curriculum time means that children miss out on important experiences. However, the outside curriculum in Reception is well planned and resources are based firmly on the EYFS areas of the English national curriculum. As a result, most children make at least satisfactory progress with their learning and some make good progress.

The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is appropriately broad and balanced, follows the English national curriculum and is enriched effectively by extra-curricular opportunities. Pupils value these after school activities and many attend. The curriculum is planned appropriately but does not always take account of the different abilities of pupils by, for example, showing how the work is adapted to the needs of the more able pupils. This limits the progress of these pupils.

At Key Stages 3 and 4 and in the sixth form the curriculum is good. It is balanced and covers all the essential areas of learning required by the National Curriculum as well as by local Spanish requirements. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils effectively and provides a strong British experience. At Key stage 4, it provides a good range of choice for pupils and means that all groups are catered for well. The range of IGCSE courses and the opportunities for after school activities ensures that pupils' achievements compare very favourably with those in schools in the UK. In the sixth form HND courses have been introduced alongside the more traditional AS and A Level course to meet the needs of all pupils more effectively. This initiative is beginning to have an impact and the early signs are that it is helping those who struggle with a traditional academic curriculum. Where pupils follow such an academic curriculum they often take a wide range of subjects at AS and A Level that provides both breadth and depth of study. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

The quality of teaching and assessment

Overall teaching and learning are good and ensure that all pupils make good progress during their time at Cambridge House. Progress is not yet outstanding because there are still some classes, especially in the primary years, where teaching is only satisfactory.

Where teaching is good in Early Years and primary classes, pupils are enabled to explore their thinking through effective questioning. In a Year 5 science lesson, for example, some good questioning enabled pupils to think independently and make mature contributions. Excellent relationships mean that pupils enjoy their lessons, are keen to learn and have very positive attitudes. The climate for learning is very good. These strengths promote pupils' learning very effectively and ensure that they make good progress.

In other lessons pupils are given work that lacks sufficient challenge and does not stretch the most able. As a result pupils at all levels, but particularly the more able, are not learning as well as they could. Giving pupils more challenging work that is better matched to their needs and abilities could significantly accelerate progress. Pupils sometimes spend too much time consolidating skills rather than extending their thinking and achieving new learning. In mathematics for example, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their problem solving and investigative skills, and this limits progress.

The use of assessment in the primary years is underdeveloped. Teachers are not always clear or confident about what makes for robust teacher assessment and this has an adverse impact on their expectations. In Early Years, children's English language skills are appropriately supported by providing a framework on which to build their understanding. The development of these skills is less successful as pupils move through primary years; in Key Stage 2 pupils are not always confident in using English to express complex ideas and knowledge. As a result some pupils do make the progress they are capable of.

Teaching and learning in the secondary years and in the sixth form are good overall. While there is some very good teaching, there are inconsistencies and not enough of the

teaching is good or excellent. This is why teaching is not yet outstanding. One of the main strengths of the teaching is teachers' secure subject knowledge. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to inspire confidence and promote enjoyment in lessons. As a result pupils make good progress and achieve well. There is some excellent practice across the secondary school and in the sixth form where students are set challenging work and questioning is used effectively to stretch thinking. In many cases, lessons are well structured so that learning moves forward at a brisk pace. In an outstanding English lesson in Year 11, for example, teaching was confident, well structured and challenging, and expectations were high. As a result pupils were highly motivated and engaged, and made excellent progress.

Teachers use a range of activities and styles of learning to keep students engaged and motivated. In the best lessons skilled questioning and good quality feedback ensure that students know how well they are doing and how to improve. This was evident in an outstanding geography lesson where pupils were able to respond to searching questions and develop their understanding very effectively. Very good relationships ensure that behaviour in lessons is never less than outstanding. These help to create an extremely positive climate for learning.

Marking is usually thorough and older pupils said that they received helpful feedback from their teachers about how well they were doing and how to improve. The use of questioning to both check pupils' progress and challenge their thinking is underdeveloped. There is some good use of technology to engage pupils but too often long presentations or too much teacher talk does not motivate or challenge pupils sufficiently. Lesson planning is detailed but greater focus could be given to what pupils are to learn by the end of the lesson: too often, objectives are tasks rather than outcomes. As a result, students are not always clear about the purpose of activities. Planning that focuses too much on the performance of teaching rather than learning means that expectations are not always as high as they could be, that the most able are not stretched enough and that assessment is not used to support learning.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and has a strong impact on pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning right across the school. The school promotes an especially positive ethos in which relationships are excellent and every pupil valued. This very strong climate promotes pupils' self-esteem, achievements and personal development very effectively.

Excellent behaviour is evident in lessons and around the school. Pupils treat others with great consideration and respect. They are very proud of their school. There is an active school council. Pupils involved speak highly of the effectiveness of the council and say that it has contributed effectively to resolving issues raised by their peers: for example, by helping to develop the policy for the use of mobile phones during in school. Pupils value such opportunities to take up positions of responsibility including that of head boy and head girl.

The PSHE programme, at primary and secondary, assemblies and religious studies in the secondary school promote pupils spiritual and moral development effectively. A display about Buddhism, for example, demonstrates the way the school teaches the values of different religious traditions. In art, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of different artistic movements, for example of pop art in Year 9. The range of languages taught, including Spanish, French and Valenciano, and the humanities programme helps to broaden pupils' cultural experiences. A wide range of enrichment activities including opportunities to be involved in the Sports Leaders Awards, the European Youth Parliament, Duke of Edinburgh Award and activities week all add to pupils' experiences and confidence.

The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The school has a strong ethos of care and support for pupils. The introduction of the HND courses demonstrate the school's commitment to supporting all pupils regardless of their ability, interests or background. Many teachers go the extra mile to get the most from individuals. Pupils enjoy school a great deal.

The school has developed a broad range of policies some of which are available on the school's website including anti-bullying, cultural diversity and awareness, tackling racism and xenophobia, rewards and sanctions, and behaviour. Pupils stated that there was little bullying and are confident of it being resolved effectively by the school. There is a qualified nurse and clear procedures to be followed whenever medical assistance is required. Health and safety procedures meet local requirements including fire safety. Supervision at break and lunch times is good.

The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The proprietor ensures that all the required checks are made on staff to confirm their suitability to work with children and recorded appropriately.

The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation are good and help to support the strong climate for learning. They meet requirements and are generally appropriate for the number and age of the pupils. Although some classrooms are small, teachers use them well and make the best use of what is available. Space is an on-going issue but over time the school has built new accommodation very successfully. There are generally good specialist facilities for subjects such as science, ICT, art and design and sports but the accommodation for music is particularly cramped. The school site is very well maintained and pupils show care for the building. There is a good range of resources available for teachers and nearly all rooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards.

The provision of information for parents, carers and others

Parents have access to a broad range of information much of which is available on the

school's website. This includes information about school policies, the curriculum and support for both parents and pupils about which subjects to study in the sixth form. Some information, such as the policy for complaints and safeguarding, is only available as hard copies and not on the website.

Reports are generally informative and provided regularly during the school year. The school is developing its links with parents through the "Gente Cambridge" (Cambridge People) programme, which is described as "a kind of networking database as a collaboration between parents and former students".

The school's procedures for handling complaints

The school meets the requirements for handling complaints although consideration should be given to placing information on its website.

Leadership and management of the school

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher is passionate about her school and is supported effectively by senior and middle leaders. There is a strong sense of teamwork and of continuity both of which contribute well to ensuring that the school runs effectively. There is an increasing and developing focus on teaching and learning and lesson observations carried out jointly with senior leaders and inspectors show that the school has a secure understanding of the characteristics of good and outstanding teaching. There is a programme of lesson observations but until recently, not enough time was spent by leaders and managers on getting into the detail of teaching and learning across the school. This explains why the overall quality of teaching is not yet consistently good and outstanding. However, the newly established teaching and learning teams, and the proposed monitoring and support programme for teaching, have the potential to make a strong impact on quality. In addition programmes such as the part-time, distance learning programme of professional development that leads to a Postgraduate Certificate of Education (International) [PGCEi] provides good opportunities for teachers to improve their practice.

The school collects and records a large amount of data about pupils' attainment particularly key stage tests and IGCSE and AS/A Level results. Leaders are aware that they need to be more rigorous about tracking pupils' progress and although new systems have been introduced, it is still too early to judge the impact. For example, the school is good at monitoring the data to identify those pupils who are underachieving but it has not yet been able to evaluate the impact of any resulting interventions. Overall, the use of data is underdeveloped and, at present, it is difficult for leaders and managers to know whether pupils are achieving as well as they should.

Self-evaluation and review is generally good although the lack of progress data means that priorities related to teaching and learning are not always identified. Nevertheless, the school uses a good range of evidence including teacher and pupil questionnaires. It has identified six priorities in its improvement plan, including the need to "raise standards and attainment by ensuring consistently good teaching and learning is happening in all subject areas." Other priorities include spoken English, assessment and tracking, and

staff development. These show that the school has identified the right priorities for improvement and that it has the capacity to improve still further.

Glossary of terms

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|--------------|------------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |

Overall effectiveness: inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.

Progress: the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

Inspection judgements

| | | | |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|
| outstanding | good | satisfactory | inadequate |
|-------------|------|--------------|------------|

The quality of education

| | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|--|--|
| Overall quality of education | | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils | | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs | | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| How well pupils make progress in their learning | | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|
| Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| The behaviour of pupils | <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

| | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|--|--|
| The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils | | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|--|--|

Leadership and management

| | | | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|--|--|
| The quality of leadership and management | | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|--|--|

School details

| | |
|--|--|
| School status | Independent |
| Type of school | All through, 3 - 18 |
| Date school opened | 1986 |
| Age range of pupils | 3 - 18 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll (full-time pupils) | Boys: 602 Girls: 633 Total: 1235 |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £5,800 |
| Address of school | Calle Profesorado Español, 1 Santa Bárbara, Rocafort 46111 Valencia (España) |
| Telephone number | +34 96 390 5019 |
| Email address | info@cambridgehouse.es |
| Headteacher | Tracy Ibberson |
| Proprietor | Tracy Ibberson |