

Eaton Hall School

Inspection report for residential special school

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Inspector	Dorrit Andrews
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About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to assure children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcome for children set out in the Children Act 2004 and relevant National Minimum Standards for the establishment.

The inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding:	this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality
Good:	this aspect of the provision is strong
Satisfactory:	this aspect of the provision is sound
Inadequate:	this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Service information

Brief description of the service

Eaton Hall School is a day and residential special school maintained by Norfolk County Council located in a residential area of Norwich, with partially wooded grounds.

It is purpose built and largely single storey; the boarding accommodation comprises of four units on the main site and a large semi-detached house, Surlingham House, situated a short distance away in a residential area. The school provides places for 38 boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties, 27 of whom currently board for some part of the week.

Summary

This was an announced inspection and all key standards were inspected. A large number of boarders participated in the inspection and contributed their views. Outcome areas for being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, positive contribution and organisation are all judged as outstanding. The remaining area, economic well-being, is judged as good.

The leadership and management of boarding is very strong and there is a firm commitment to continue to improve the school's facilities to support pupils' development and progress. Considerable improvements have been made to Surlingham House since the last inspection to provide pupils with accommodation which is consistent with their needs. Major upgrading of the main site residential provision is about to commence and its completion is eagerly awaited by pupils and staff.

Pupils continue to receive outstanding pastoral care and individual support from experienced and competent staff and external professionals where appropriate. Firmly established communication systems across the school community contribute effectively to pupils' welfare and the monitoring of their well-being.

Pupils are consulted on a range of matters, including menus and the refurbishment and upgrading of accommodation. They report they are able to make suggestions which are acted upon, are taken seriously and are listened to.

Records and documentation are well maintained overall. However, not all monitoring visits carried out by the local authority comment on the areas required. A recommendation has been raised in relation to this matter.

The recommendation raised at the last inspection has been addressed.

The overall quality rating is outstanding.

This is an overview of what the inspector found during the inspection.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the school was asked to ensure that all monitored records are signed to evidence that monitoring is takes place. Sampled records evidence that appropriate action has been taken in response.

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

The physical and emotional health needs of pupils continue to be actively promoted and effectively supported in partnership with other professionals, including psychologists and health service staff. Pupils receive advice, guidance and support on a range of health and social issues through the school's personal, social and health education programme, visiting speakers and care staff. This work is reinforced by pupils' involvement in creating posters and displays which are prominently displayed throughout the school and residential provision.

Pupils' health care needs are identified and parental consent to medical treatment is obtained. Staff follow clear procedures for the management and administration of medication both on and off site. Sampled records are in good order and medication is securely stored. First aid training is provided to staff, regular updates are attended and qualified first aid staff are always available on duty. Health matters such as enuresis are dealt with sensitively and pupils return home when unwell. Parents are kept informed of health appointments and checks conducted in school and are encouraged to attend wherever possible.

Emphasis is placed on the provision of a balanced, healthy diet and exercise. Pupils contribute ideas to menus through a number of ways including the school council and well-being forum, and are actively involved in the purchasing of healthy snacks for the tuck shop. Special dietary needs are catered for when required and systems are in place to sensitively monitor individual eating patterns. Meal times are well organised with clear routines and expectations to promote the development of social skills. The majority of pupils refer favourably to the food provided. In the main site boarding provision, pupils are able to prepare drinks and snacks with varying levels of supervision depending on individual need. At Surlingham House, boys participate in an independence skills programme and are regularly involved in planning, shopping and cooking meals. Drinking water is available in school and pupils are able to carry sport bottles with them and obtain refills from water stations at break time.

Food handling and hygiene training is undertaken by catering and care staff and regular updates received.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Boarders' privacy is respected and information is handled appropriately. Space is provided for pupils to meet privately with visitors and parents and they are able to make and receive telephone calls in private where appropriate. Lockable storage is provided for pupils' personal possessions both in school and the boarding provision.

Information regarding the school's complaint procedure is provided to parents, carers and boarders; help line information is also provided to boarders. No complaints have been received by the school since the last inspection and no complaints have been received by Ofsted. Boarders identify a range of staff they feel able to go to with any worries and concerns and are confident that they will be listened to and supported.

Policies and procedures promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils and strong working partnerships are in place with other professionals concerned with safeguarding children and young people. All staff receive child protection training as part of their induction and regular updates. External training is attended by designated staff and governors and parents are informed of the school's duties and responsibilities in relation to child protection matters.

Bullying is not identified as a problem at the school. Pupils report positive responses by staff to issues raised and state 'boys are usually okay to one another; if there are issues, staff listen and help to sort them out' and 'staff bring boys together to sort out problems; they shake hands afterwards'. Bullying issues are openly discussed through assemblies, curriculum based activities and during tutor time. The school's therapeutic intervention co-ordinator supports individuals where a specific need has been identified and uses one-to-one sessions to explore issues and the development of strategies for anger management and assertiveness.

Staff are vigilant in their supervision of boarders and the monitoring of their whereabouts. Detailed procedures are in place for responding to pupils leaving the site without permission, including a working protocol with the local police. There are no incidents of boarders being reported missing. A strong working partnership is established with the school's attendance officer to address matters of concern at an early stage and to reduce associated risks of children's non-attendance.

Pupils continue to be supported to develop appropriate behaviour through the use of behaviour plans, reflective discussions and supportive strategies. Such strategies include the school's privilege scheme, counselling and individual support programmes. Staff receive regular behaviour management training including de-escalation techniques and the use of physical intervention. Good records are maintained of the use of sanctions and physical intervention and pupils' comments are recorded. Pupils are very clear regarding the expectations placed upon them and are able to explain the school's privilege scheme levels which they consider to be fair. They also refer to the use of behaviour plans and targets and how staff support them in finding and maintaining strategies to help them which are effective. For example, pupils explained 'you can go up and down but staff help you and explain how you can get back to your level'. Good work, positive behaviour and effort are recognised and rewarded across the school community.

Safety matters are taken seriously by the school and robust procedures are in place for the maintenance of a safe environment for pupils, staff and visitors. Records demonstrate that regular safety and servicing checks are carried out to fire, electrical, water and gas installations. Regular fire drills take place at different times and boarders are familiar with fire evacuation procedures.

Robust procedures are in place for the recruitment and checking of staff and the monitoring of visitors and contractors. A record of visitors is maintained and proof of identity is requested. These practices reduce potential risks to the welfare of pupils.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

The school's boarding provision actively supports and contributes to pupils' educational progress. A stimulating activity programme provides pupils with opportunities to keep active, develop social and life skills and build their self-esteem. For example, boys in Surlingham House learn how to organise themselves to walk or cycle to school, shop and help prepare meals. Teaching staff undertake extraneous duties and support the evening programme by providing science, art and sporting activities. Both pupils and staff report favourably on the opportunities to engage in this way and to strengthen their working relationship and understanding of each other.

Care staff know boarders very well and are familiar with their educational needs and progress. Firmly established communication systems contribute effectively to pupils welfare and the monitoring of their well-being. For example, care and teaching staff are involved in regular liaison meetings, contribute to reviews and attend morning briefings.

Pupils continue to receive excellent pastoral care and individual support in line with their needs. Effective working partnerships with the local authority and a range of external professionals, including speech and language specialists, attendance officer, health services and psychologists support the work of the school with pupils and their families. Boarders identify a range of adults across the school community to whom they would go with any worries, including the headteacher, counsellor and tutors.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Pupils are actively encouraged and supported to express their views and be involved in decision-making. Excellent forums include the school council, tutor meetings and the pupils' well-being group. Recent changes highlighted by pupils include the provision of more lockers in school and the development of a gaming room in the residential area. Pupils have also contributed suggestions to the refurbishment of Surlingham House and catering staff have joined pupils in class to discuss healthy eating and changes to menus.

Admissions to the school are planned and tailored to individual pupils as far as possible. Home visits are undertaken and every effort is made to gather as much information as possible about a child and their assessed needs prior to their admission and arrival. Care is taken to minimise the impact of new admissions to boarding and boarders report that staff and other pupils are helpful. Pupils also explained they found being away from home 'difficult to start with' but conclude 'activities help to take your mind off things when you first start'.

Pupils' needs are assessed effectively and regularly reviewed and updated in conjunction with pupils, parents and the local authority. Individual support programmes are compiled and are signed by the pupil, personal tutor and principal care manager. Time is regularly set aside for personal tutors to meet with pupils to discuss their progress and any difficulties. Pupils report 'it can be difficult to talk about some things but you feel better'.

Boarders are able to retain contact with their families and can make and receive telephone calls in private. Staff regularly update parents and carers on their child's progress, medical matters and any concerns. Home visits and school based meetings are used to support the work of the school with individual pupils and focus on parenting skills, consistency and strategies of support.

Achieving economic wellbeing

The provision is good.

Boarding accommodation is provided on the main site and at another unit, Surlingham House, a short distance away. Considerable improvements have been made to Surlingham House since the last inspection in consultation with pupils and staff. All bedrooms have been redecorated and completely refurbished with new carpets, curtains, beds and furniture to provide a welcoming and pleasant environment for pupils. Bathing and toilet facilities have also been upgraded and the house is clean, warm and well ventilated. Care has been taken to create accommodation of a more domestic appearance to support the unit's preparation for independence programme.

For example, smaller kitchen appliances and cooking utensils are provided, and domestic style furniture, fittings and accessories are in place in communal areas.

The school's long awaited upgrading of its main site residential provision is about to commence. Building contractors have met with staff and pupils to explain how work will proceed and the safety measures that will be put in place. Opportunities will be made for pupils to receive regular updates from the builders on the progress of the project and to raise any questions. Pupils are eager for work to start and are excited at the prospect of having new facilities and more space. In the meantime, staff continue to work hard to provide a clean and welcoming environment for pupils and encourage the personalisation of sleeping areas.

Positive links are promoted and maintained with the local community through a number of initiatives including supporting the elderly and involvement in ecological projects. Pupils' confidence and feelings of self-worth benefit greatly from their participation in these projects.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

The leadership and management of boarding is very strong and there is a clear commitment to continue to improve the school's facilities to enhance pupil's progress and their development. Pupils are looked after by very experienced, well trained and competent staff who understand their needs.

A school brochure and statement of boarding principles and practice provide comprehensive information to parents and interested parties. Work is being undertaken to include updated details of staff and their qualifications at the next review of documentation. A separate illustrated guide is provided to pupils and is viewed by them as 'easy to understand' and 'helpful'.

Staff have access to a range of training opportunities both in-house and external to the school to support them in their work. These include child protection, first aid, behaviour management and working with families. External support is provided to the headteacher and established arrangements are in place for regular personal and casework supervision, appraisals and staff meetings. A handbook is provided to staff and policies and procedures are readily accessed and updated.

The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding. Pupils' individual needs are recognised and supported and they are encouraged to embrace opportunities to participate in local community work to widen their understanding of society and the needs of others, including the elderly and children with disabilities.

A duty rota is followed in practice and time is scheduled for handover sessions, staff meetings and casework tasks. Pupils know who is on duty and who is responsible for them at specific times, including during the night. Suitable arrangements are in place for duty cover in times of staff sickness and absence through use of the school's own pool of staff. The low turnover of staff provides pupils with consistency and stability and promotes positive relationships.

Good, effective systems are in place for the monitoring of pupils' welfare and the operation of the residential provision. Specific monitoring tasks are delegated to members of the senior management team and the headteacher prepares regular reports to the governing body. Current projects within the school are reported to have led to greater involvement of the governing

body to the benefit of pupils. Regular monitoring visits are conducted by the local authority and reports prepared. However, not all reports comment on areas required.

What must be done to secure future improvement?

Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions, which must be taken so that the registered person meets the Care Standards Act 2000, and the National Minimum Standards. The Registered Provider must comply with the given timescales.

Standard	Action	Due date
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Recommendations

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure all monitoring visits conducted by the local authority include all matters detailed in national minimum standard 33.3. (breach of national minimum standard 33.3)