

Eastwood Grange School

Eastwood Grange, Milken Lane, Ashover, Chesterfield, S45 0BA

Inspection dates

10 May 2013

Context of the inspection

The school was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2012 when it was judged to provide an inadequate quality of education. The quality of the curriculum, teaching and assessment was inadequate because the school was not meeting all pupils' needs and not allowing them to make good progress. The welfare, health and safety arrangements for pupils were also judged to be inadequate. The school's safeguarding arrangements met current requirements and the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was satisfactory, although pupils' behaviour was inadequate. The school failed to meet 18 of the independent school regulations and did not fully meet its aims. An inspection of the care provided in the children's home took place at the same time and was reported upon separately.

Following the inspection, the school drew up an action plan to address the regulations that were not met. This was evaluated by Ofsted in January 2013; the proposed actions were judged to be satisfactory subject to satisfactory implementation and the timescale for implementation was also judged to be satisfactory. This progress monitoring visit was made at the request of the Department for Education to check the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan. The residential accommodation was not inspected.

Since the inspection in November 2012, some senior care staff have left the school and the Vice-Principal (Head of Education) is on sick leave. A consultant headteacher has been working full-time at the school since January 2013. The school has engaged a school improvement partner who is supporting the implementation of the action plan.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

Good progress

The inspection in November 2012 found that the school's curriculum policy was not implemented effectively. The education provided was not fulfilling the requirements of every pupil's statement of special educational needs or adequately preparing them for the responsibilities and experiences of adult life. Pupils did not make enough progress according to their ability in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding in the subjects taught. Plans and schemes of work were not well suited to pupils' needs. In particular, teaching in literacy and mathematics was not adapted for the different abilities of pupils in the same class. In addition, information and communication technology (ICT) was not used fully enough in other subject areas. Some pupils were following inappropriate courses for the level they were working at, and without them having sufficient knowledge and confidence in their basic literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum was too academic for some pupils who would otherwise benefit from more practical and vocational options.

This inspection found that the school has taken positive steps through the implementation of its action plan to improve the provision it makes for pupils' learning. The curriculum policy has been reviewed and revised. Plans are being implemented, in conjunction with local colleges and other partners, to provide a wider range of courses that include more practical and vocational options, including animal husbandry and car mechanics. A full review of pupils' statements of special educational needs has been made and individual education plans now focus on the key requirements of the statements. A much improved and consistent emphasis on literacy, numeracy and ICT in discrete lessons and across different subjects is ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to practise and apply these key skills in a much wider range of everyday contexts. As a result, they are becoming much more confident in their work and are rising to the challenge of the staff's higher expectations of what they can achieve. Pupils are now making faster progress and achieving targets that were previously considered beyond their reach.

The inspection in November 2012 identified many weaknesses in the quality of teaching and assessment. Teaching was inadequate. Staff expectations of what pupils knew and could achieve were not high enough. Pupils frequently showed disinterest in their work because they rarely were able to work independently, use their own ideas or think for themselves. Too often, activities were not well crafted and did not provide enough challenge for some pupils while work was far too hard for others. Teachers did not demonstrate sufficient knowledge and confidence in the levelling of pupils' work. Certain teachers did not demonstrate appropriate subject knowledge or have sufficient skills to explain well their subject to pupils. The pattern of double lessons was inappropriate for pupils who found it difficult to concentrate for long periods of time. Time was not well managed in lessons, with frequent instances of time-filling activities being introduced with little learning potential. Scrutiny of books showed that pupils got through too little worthwhile work in lessons.

This inspection found that the school has taken swift steps through effectively implementing its action plan to improve the quality of teaching and therefore improve the pace of pupils' progress. A new teaching and learning policy has been devised and implemented; a common format for lesson planning has been introduced across the school. Staff now have more accurate information about what pupils know and can do, together with regularly updated information about pupils' needs derived from their statements of special educational needs. This information, together with frequent discussions with pupils about their interests, enables teachers to plan lessons that focus on what individuals are to learn and the way in which they will do this. Additional support staff have been employed and a rigorous programme of monitoring, undertaken by senior leaders and outside consultants, is identifying strengths and areas of development. This monitoring not only includes observing lessons but also the regular scrutiny of teachers' planning, pupils' work and assessment records. Training has been provided for staff to improve their subject knowledge and expertise, and in using assessment information to secure the next steps in pupils' learning. Single period lessons have been introduced for academic subjects and guidance provided for staff on using time and resources more effectively. Teachers and support staff have undergone training in adapting pupils' learning to match their preferred styles of learning and in more effectively managing pupil's behaviour. Observations during this inspection, which included visits to all classes, found that lessons were conducted at a generally good pace and that pupils' needs and interests were catered for well. Classroom management was effective and good pastoral support was provided at an early stage for pupils who started to feel unable to continue in the lesson. This early intervention enabled the pupils to make a quick and successful return to the classroom, minimising the disruption to their own learning and that of others. Scrutiny

of a sample of pupil's work confirmed the accelerated progress made by all pupils, together with a significant improvement in the quality, quantity and standard of their work.

The inspection in November 2012 found that the school's assessment system was neither accurate nor working well enough for each member of staff to have an accurate handle on pupils' achievement and progress. Consequently, pupils were not set appropriate or realistic academic targets. Information about pupils' previous learning was often incomplete. Schemes of work and plans were not pitched at the levels at which the pupils were working. Any data collected was not being effectively used to shape lesson plans, which were more about what teachers wanted to deliver than pupils' needs. Where plans reflected adapted objectives in an attempt to meet pupils' needs, these were not well enough considered to ensure that the challenge was great enough, nor too great, for all of the pupils.

This inspection found that the school's action plan to overhaul its assessment systems and the use of the information these provide are being effectively implemented. Training has helped teaching and support staff to collect and interpret data more effectively, and to use this to guide lesson planning and delivery. As a result, lessons are increasingly well tailored to individual pupil's needs and interests, and learning objectives are more closely focused on what pupils will learn rather than the activities they will undertake. The marking of pupils' work has improved, and they are now more actively involved in checking their own work and that of their peers. As a result of these improved systems and procedures, teachers and pupils have a much more accurate view of what individuals can achieve and pupils are rising well to the challenge, buoyed by their success.

The inspection in November 2012 found that the school's behaviour policy was not implemented effectively. The school's procedures for dealing with inappropriate behaviour were not fit for purpose. The method of behaviour management employed by the school did not enable pupils to take enough responsibility for their behaviour. The arrangements for supervising pupils were inadequate. There was an over-reliance on care staff to sort out the behaviour of pupils during the school day, often unnecessarily. Pupils were taken out of lessons too frequently and not as a last resort because teaching did not use effective strategies for managing pupils' behaviour. The atmosphere was overly and unnecessarily regimented, and this restricted pupils' ability to learn. Not all staff in the school were sufficiently skilled to effectively manage pupils' behaviour and retain the pupils within lessons. Often, staff did not deal with misbehaviour appropriately, with sanctions disproportionate to the scale of the incident. In a number of cases, the situation had definitely been exacerbated by staff. Teachers were not consistently allowing pupils to use their initiative in lessons or around the school. As a result, pupils had too few opportunities to contribute to the school or wider communities.

This inspection found that the school is successfully implementing its action plan. A full review and revision of the behaviour policy has been undertaken, including the nature and availability of sanctions. The arrangements now in place for supervising pupils are effective and the sanctions imposed for misbehaviour proportionate. Senior leaders have rightly linked changes in managing behaviour to the quality of teaching and the curriculum, and these improvements have been achieved in tandem. Training for staff and the development of pupils' individual behaviour plans have underpinned the school's evolving new ethos and values. The shift away from regimentation to a calm, orderly and business-like atmosphere has been achieved by senior leaders gaining the confidence of staff and pupils alike. Staff expectations are high but realistic and pupils are keen to repay the trust

that has been vested in them. The involvement of the school council in designing and furnishing the common room, which is used by all pupils, has paved the way for them to express their opinions in the knowledge that their ideas and views are respected. Behaviour in lessons and around the school was consistently good on this inspection and the incidence of poor behaviour is rapidly diminishing because staff and pupils alike are much better at responding to the triggers that signal potential problems. Pupils are much more involved in taking responsibility for their own learning in lessons and in contributing to the work of the school community. Many regularly visit the village and neighbouring towns where they participate in a range of sporting and other activities. Fund raising for charity and regular themed dinners are very popular activities with pupils, providing them with a fresh outlook on life and culture. During this inspection, pupils were very welcoming and polite; relationships observed between pupils and all members of staff demonstrated a high level of mutual respect and regard. The leaders of the school council, who met with this inspector and gave him a guided tour of the school, exhibited a high degree of maturity and consideration. In their discussion with the inspector, including their frank and honest answers to his questions, they proved themselves to be able ambassadors for the school and the success of its work.

The inspection in November 2012 found that there were ineffective measures to ensure pupils' safety. In particular, risk assessments were not updated frequently enough, and there were inadequate arrangements for the security of the grounds and buildings. Visitors could enter the school site and the school buildings easily, and without challenge or proof of identity. Pupils had no opportunity for informal outside play at break times but could easily abscond if they chose to do so.

This inspection found that the school has acted promptly to implement its action plan. Risk assessments have been thoroughly overhauled and the information is now readily accessible, whenever required. The security arrangements are now fit for purpose and the erection of fencing around the courtyard area has provided an ideal space of pupils to play or relax, using the good range of equipment now available. Organised activities in the sports barn are now also available for pupils' use during breaks and at other times.

The inspection in November 2012 found that not all the required information was made available to parents, carers and others, as required. These shortcomings have been addressed through the revised school website. The information is also available in a paper version, if requested.

The school now fully meets its aims.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school has made good progress and now meets all regulatory requirements

Inspection team

Michael Best, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Information about this school

- Eastwood Grange is an independent day school with dual registration as a children's home. It is owned by the Priory Group and occupies a large hall with additional purpose built classrooms and sports hall located in extensive grounds close to a Derbyshire village.
- The school is registered for 36 boys aged from nine to 16 years with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There are currently 24 pupils aged 10 to 16 years on roll. Twenty-one of the pupils are cared for at the children's home on site and three are day pupils.
- All pupils have experienced severely disrupted education prior to arrival and all have a statement of special educational needs. Most of the pupils are of White British backgrounds.
- The school opened in 1990. It aims to 'reverse the downward spiral in sociability, behaviour and academic achievement; raise self-esteem through positive relationships; broaden horizons through a broad and balanced curriculum which utilises individual strengths and develops pupils' interests; raise standards in literacy and numeracy and prepare their pupils for life'.

School details

Unique reference number	113026
Inspection number	422941
DfE registration number	8360/6013
This inspection was conducted at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. It was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005.	
Type of school	Independent
School status	Independent School
Age range of pupils	9–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	24
Number of part time pupils	0
Proprietor	Priory Group
Chair	N/A
Principal	Glen Smith
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 November 2012
Annual fees (day pupils)	£60,992
Telephone number	01246 590255
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