

Eaton Hall Specialist Academy

Eaton Hall School, Pettus Road, NORWICH, NR4 7BU

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| Inspection dates | 09/02/2016 to 11/02/2016 | |
| The overall experiences and progress of children and young people | Good | 2 |
| The quality of care and support | Outstanding | 1 |
| How well children and young people are protected | Good | 2 |
| The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings

The residential provision is good because

- The young people continue to be at the centre of all practice and make significant progress during their time at the school. They make progress academically, behaviourally and socially. Leaders, managers, staff, parents, professionals and young people themselves recognise this progress.
- A committed staff team, led by passionate and aspirational managers, provide a consistent approach that enables positive relationships to develop and underpins the progress young people make and the outstanding quality of care they receive.
- The young people feel safe in the school. They are able to identify staff with whom they can share concerns. Where concerns have been identified, the school has shared these with appropriate agencies.
- The young people benefit from access to a range of creative and stimulating leisure activities. They are able to enjoy opportunities that they would not otherwise experience.
- There are areas of practice that the school could improve further. Monitoring reports by an independent person lack depth and challenge. The staff receive regular supervisions designed to provide emotional support. However, these sessions do not routinely consider other key elements of supervision such as quality of practice and professional development. In one case, the school did not update a young person's risk assessment following receipt of information that should have triggered this. Records of physical interventions do not consistently capture the behaviour that necessitated the physical intervention taking place.

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school meets the national minimum standards for residential special schools

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that risk assessments are reviewed and updated when new information comes to light that suggests a risk may have increased or changed. This review should be recorded on the young person's case file.
- Ensure that records relating to physical interventions clearly record the behaviour that has necessitated the physical intervention.
- Ensure that visits undertaken in relation to Standard 20 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools contain sufficient detail to contribute to a culture of continuous improvement through challenge.
- Ensure that, in addition to the emotionally supportive sessions currently provided, staff receive supervision that includes feedback and guidance on practice and is recorded.

Information about this inspection

This inspection was announced in the morning, and two social care inspectors arrived at the school within three hours. An inspector visited all residential accommodation areas during the inspection. Inspection activities included meeting young people, eating meals with young people, observing evening activities, meeting the head teacher and head of care, meeting a group of residential staff, meeting staff with designated responsibilities, holding discussions with parents and external professionals and sampling documentation relating to the safety and welfare of pupils.

Inspection team

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| Ashley Hinson | Lead social care inspector |
| Fiona Littlefield | Social care inspector |

Full Report

Information about this school

Eaton Hall Specialist Academy is a day and residential special school located in partially wooded grounds, in a residential area of Norwich. It is purpose built and largely single storey; the residential accommodation comprises of three units on the main site and a large semi-detached house situated a short distance away in a residential area. The school currently provides places for 54 boys with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The residential facilities are available for up to 31 pupils. It is used for differing periods from one up to four nights per week. The school has developed a flexible approach to residence, offering placements based on pupil's needs.

Inspection Judgements

The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

Good

This is a good residential provision, with outstanding features. The needs of young people lie at the heart of the boarding arrangements. The young people who attend the school make significant progress in relation to their starting points. They make progress educationally, emotionally and socially. A professional said: 'Their reading and writing has improved. They are able to talk about their feelings and sort things out.' In line with the school's ethos, there is a well-established focus on preparing young people for life after the school. This includes the significantly successful reintegration of young people with their families and to mainstream education.

The residential provision is an integral part of the whole school. The school ensures that boarding is an opportunity for 24 hour learning. The staff read with young people as part of evening activities. They are committed to offering safe but enjoyable experiences. The activities are wide ranging and imaginative but allow the young people to learn to work as a team and respect one another. All activities are well organised and reviewed.

The staff give the safeguarding needs of young people a high priority. Activities are risk assessed. The young people know about issues such as internet safety, safety in the classroom, walking on the road and not being in classrooms on their own. They report getting on well with one another most of the time. Some individual risk assessments would benefit from greater depth. The school has sound healthcare arrangements.

The young people have developed close and positive relationships with staff. They know what to expect and who to talk to. They have their own link worker and approach all staff confidently. The staff are highly skilled. They have an appropriately authoritative manner but are interested and attentive.

The views and wishes of young people are central to planning processes. They are able to contribute in various ways both directly with staff and more formally through care planning processes. There is an emphasis on a speedy response so young people are confident that their views are taken seriously.

Leaders and managers are passionate about the quality of the school and have high aspirations for the young people. They have addressed the recommendations made at the last inspection. There are monitoring processes in place. However, the depth of challenge in the associated reports is variable.

The quality of care and support

Outstanding

The young people make outstanding progress as the result of the well organised and committed approach of the school. Feedback from professionals and families is consistently positive, noting the school's willingness to work in partnership and to take on new ideas. One parent said: 'They work very well with me. I used to feel really overwhelmed but now I look forward to seeing him and have more energy and patience.'

A professional said: 'Partnership is excellent and they are in touch regularly and often.'

The admission process for young people is sound and robust. Once the school commits to taking a young person they go to considerable lengths to ensure that they can settle and are able to raise any comments or concerns. There is a school council. The young people are aware of who their representative is. The young people have regular liaison meetings with their teaching tutor and child care officer, where the three meet to talk about progress. The young people are able to contact their families whilst they board. A phone is available to them. Inspectors saw this in use during the inspection.

The staff and managers know the needs and vulnerabilities of the young people. Care plans are up to date and regularly reviewed. The staff have regular, systematic meetings during the day to exchange key information regarding the young people. This enables the timely sharing of information and contributes to a consistent approach from the staff team. There is a seamless service with the care and education staff working together. The young people see this and feel secure as a result.

The staff value the young people and treat them with respect. The young people are encouraged to behave in a way that is polite and courteous to each other and staff. The school sees this as a way for young people to learn how to behave at school and in the community. Interaction at mealtimes is part of the learning day. This instillation of politeness does not prevent the young people being themselves; there is no sense of regimentation to interactions. Mealtimes, for example, are polite but exuberant. There is a strong culture of rewarding positive behaviour. For example, young people are rewarded with 'earnies' and during the inspection one young person had achieved so many, earned over a long period of time, he was rewarded with a new laptop. The pride staff felt for him was clear.

The building is clean, tidy and comfortable with recent redecoration of the residential areas. The young people learn to keep their rooms and communal areas tidy. They take pride in themselves and their surroundings.

The school sees leisure as a learning opportunity. The young people have a role in choosing what they want to do but a number of factors are taken into account. Such as, ensuring that some involve physical activity, getting out into the community, learning to behave in a restaurant or other public venue. All activities have purposeful goals. Whilst the staff ensure activities are grounded in risk assessments, they are creative and ambitious. As a result, the young people have access to spirited and wide ranging leisure activities that they may not otherwise experience.

The school promotes healthy living. Many of the activities that young people participate in are active. The schools arrangements for managing medication are safe and effective. They link with mental health professionals to ensure young people receive the support they need.

The young people are encouraged to eat nutritious, home cooked meals. They are encouraged to try new and unusual foods. Consequently, mealtimes are another opportunity for young people to broaden their experiences whilst eating healthily.

How well children and young people are protected

Good

The young people report feeling safe and are able to identify people within the school with whom they can share concerns. There have been no incidents of bullying within the residential provision. The young people have not raised this as a worry during this inspection. A young person said: 'Bullying isn't tolerated in any shape or form.'

The school maintains a log of all child protection concerns. When staff identify safeguarding concerns, they share these with the appropriate authorities. When the school has not been satisfied with the response from external agencies they have challenged their actions and responses.

Regular fire tests and drills take place. The site manager conducts regular audits and observations to monitor the safety of the physical environment. Visitors have to sign in to the school and the school provides them with written safeguarding information.

There have been occasions when young people have left the school site without permission. In three instances this occurred during residential time. These three incidents did not require police involvement, nor was the young person categorised as missing. A police officer noted that the school's response to incidents involving young people was appropriate.

There are well established processes in place for staff recruitment. The young people and governors are involved in this process. The school adheres to safe recruitment principles.

There are frequent occasions when staff physically intervene to safeguard the young people at the school. There has been a sharp increase in the autumn term of 2015 in comparison to the autumn term of 2014 in the number of incidents. Leaders and managers monitor the number of physical interventions and are alert to a number of contributory factors. These factors include a cohort of newly admitted young people with complex behavioural issues.

There is access to statistical data. This supports the analysis of incidents. The school maintains records of physical interventions. These include young people's views. This further conveys the message that their opinions on something as significant as this are important. However, records do not always contain the detail of the behaviour that has necessitated the physical intervention.

The school completes risk assessments for young people. These include risk assessments relating to sexual behaviours and harm reduction plans that outline a staged response to behaviour. In one incident, there was no written update of a risk assessment, or completion of a sexualised behaviour risk assessment following receipt of new information about concerning behaviour alleged to have occurred outside of the school. Whilst leaders and managers were adamant that they considered the risks, the records do not evidence that a proper assessment took place and that the potential hazard was considered and mitigated.

The impact and effectiveness of leaders and managers Good

Suitably qualified leaders and managers lead the residential provision. They have considerable experience and are passionate about the school they lead and the young people they support. There is a clear culture of high expectations of young people and of

staff. There have been no complaints since the last inspection.

Leaders and managers work hard to engage with parents. They are exploring and implementing a range of creative approaches to increase parental involvement. This includes focused coffee mornings with guest speakers. Parents speak highly about the quality of care provided and the difference this makes to them and their children's lives.

There is a clear, staggered induction process in place for new employees. This begins with the school's own induction booklet, moving onto the Children's Workforce Development Council induction standards and culminating in the NVQ Level 3. This provides staff with a secure introduction to the school. They receive safeguarding training and training in physical intervention and de-escalation techniques.

The school has a broad range of policies and procedures in place, in line with statutory expectations. At the start of the inspection some key information on the school website was out of date. Managers addressed this during the inspection. There is a thorough handbook for staff.

The staff receive annual appraisals and a mid-year review. They also receive regular supervision. Managers describe supervision as the first 'more formal aspect of staff support.' They see these sessions to be emotionally supportive and problem solving for staff. These sessions do not routinely consider quality of practice, nor are they recorded. This makes quality assuring the process difficult.

Leaders and managers undertake internal audits and quality assurance exercises to scrutinise the quality of the school. Governors monitor the quality of practice. They receive reports and seek further information as they see fit. An independent visitor visits the school on a half termly basis. The records of these visits offer little insight into the school and provide limited scrutiny. For example, there has been no feedback from staff or young people noted in the reports since the last inspection. In addition, the most recent visits have not been unannounced.

What inspection judgements mean

The experiences and progress of children and young people are at the centre of the inspection. Inspectors will use their professional judgement to determine the weight and significance of their findings in this respect. The judgements included in the report are made against *Inspections of boarding and residential provision in schools: the inspection framework*.

| Judgement | Description |
|----------------------|---|
| Outstanding | A school where the experiences and progress of children and young people consistently exceeds the standard of good and results in sustained progress and achievement. The outcomes achieved by children and young people are outstanding and the impact the boarding/residential provision has had in supporting this progress and achieving these outcomes is clearly evidenced. |
| Good | A school providing effective services which exceed minimum requirements. Children and young people are protected and cared for and have their welfare safeguarded and promoted. |
| Requires improvement | A school where there are no serious or widespread failures that result in children and young people's welfare not being safeguarded or promoted. However, the overall outcomes, experiences and progress of children and young people are not yet good. |
| Inadequate | A school where there are serious and/or widespread failures that mean children and young people are not protected or their welfare is not promoted or safeguarded or if their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress. |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 139099 |
| Social care unique reference number | SC038324 |
| DfE registration number | 926/7015 |

This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

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| Type of school | Residential Special School |
| Number of boarders on roll | 54 |
| Gender of boarders | Boys |
| Age range of boarders | 5 to 16 |
| Headteacher | Mr Keith Bates |
| Date of previous boarding inspection | 24/02/2015 |
| Telephone number | 01603 457480 |
| Email address | office@eatonhallacademy.co.uk |

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