

Centre Academy East Anglia

14–15
September 2016

Church Road, Brettenham, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 7QR

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h)

- The previous inspection found that the curriculum did not meet pupils' needs.
- In the action plan, the proprietor undertook to extend the curriculum.
- The current curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to improve their basic skills, study GCSE qualifications and pursue The America Diploma. In addition, accredited awards have been introduced for pupils not suited to the rigours of GCSE studies. Pupils feel satisfied with the choices provided for them, particularly those studying The American Diploma. Some progress has been made in broadening provision to give pupils more opportunities to participate in sporting and cultural activities and off-site visits during and after school. However, the range of enrichment activities remains too narrow, particularly for boarding pupils.
- Pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care (EHC) plan told inspectors that they feel that they receive the additional therapies needed to aid their development and enjoyment of school life. However, the weighted caseloads of therapists identified at the time of the previous inspection have not been eased. One speech and language therapist has left the school and another works part time, so it remains unclear how all of the needs stated on pupils' statements or EHC plans are met.
- Not all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress in some subjects because the overall quality of teaching is not good enough. Monitoring by senior leaders has identified some ineffective teaching that currently undermines the overall quality of teaching and limits the progress made by pupils.
- This standard remains unmet.

Paragraphs 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(f), 3(g), 4

- The previous inspection found that the school did not successfully accurately or rigorously monitor the progress of pupils over time, taking into account their age and starting points. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment was too variable across the school and not enough of it was good. This continues to be the case and the standards are not met.
- In the action plan, the proprietor undertook to implement new procedures to assess pupils' starting points and use this information as a basis for further, regular assessment of pupils' progress.
- School leaders are unable to illustrate how well all pupils are doing because there are no systematic, rigorous procedures in place to monitor and evaluate progress. Plans to introduce new procedures to assess the starting points of each pupil and track their progress over time have been agreed, but at this stage have not been implemented.

- The overall quality of teaching varies too widely. During the inspection, not all teaching was observed by inspectors. Senior leaders felt this was unnecessary as weaknesses in teaching had already been identified by them. Some external training has been arranged to improve teachers' performance. However, ineffective practice represents a significant proportion of the teaching pupils receive, and inevitably has a detrimental effect on their learning and progress in some subjects.
- Teachers know pupils' backgrounds and personal needs well but they do not have an accurate overview of their prior attainments. The lack of a framework to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly means that they do not have sufficient information to plan learning that is suitably matched to their abilities and provides sufficient challenge for all pupils. Consequently, pupils are often given the same tasks, which are too easy for some and too difficult for others. Pupils told inspectors that in some subjects, 'we are taught stuff we already know'. At times, tasks are completed quickly by some pupils, but no further work is provided to extend their learning.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers are organised and display detailed subject knowledge. They share positive relations with pupils that encourage them to engage fully and learn well. Learning is planned to capture pupils' interest. For example, in a GCSE English lesson the teacher used detailed subject knowledge to act out scenes from Macbeth with the pupils to promote their understanding of the play in a meaningful and stimulating way. Questioning is used effectively by some teachers to engage pupils in debate and check their understanding. Some teachers praise pupils regularly when they work hard and contribute their ideas and views. Time is managed effectively by some teachers. Pupils feel that the shortened lessons introduced this year enable them to learn well, get organised and plan what they need to do in 'prep time' at the end of the day.
- New resources added this term have enhanced the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. Pupils recognise these changes, noting that additional equipment such as pens, pencils and rulers is now available in lessons. Interactive whiteboards installed in three classrooms enable teachers to display information clearly and enhance pupils' learning through digital images and videos. Subject leaders have received enhanced budgets this year to make further improvements in their curriculum areas.
- Summative end-of-year tests provide an indication of pupils' attainment which informs an annual end-of-year report to parents. However, without a framework to assess how well pupils are progressing over time, senior leaders are unable to evaluate accurately pupils' performance or report this to parents at key intervals of the year.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraph 8, 8(a), 8(b)

- This standard is now met because of improvements in the arrangements for boarders. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe, free from bullying and that school is an enjoyable place to be. Boarding pupils recognise the improvements made to keep them safe. They appreciate the changes made to ensure that girls and boys have separate dormitories and facilities. A new study area has been provided for them. This is spartan but there are plans to develop it further and make it a welcoming environment in which to learn.
- Sanctions for poor behaviour are recorded accurately and appropriately. Incident reports are routinely completed but this information is not analysed in detail to spot patterns and trends, or to inform strategies to manage behaviour.

- The school's safeguarding policy is up to date and made available on the school's website. Procedures to safeguard pupils, including checking the suitability of staff appointed to the school are all in place.

Paragraph 12

- This standard is now met. At the previous inspection, pupils' safety, particularly the risk of fire in the boarding facilities, had not been assessed fully.
- In the action plan, the proprietor undertook to revise risk assessments of the site's facilities and make adjustments to the school's fire procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- All safety measures have been taken and approved by the county fire service. The school's own fire crew practise possible scenarios so that they know what to do if fire breaks out.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b)

- This standard is now met. At the previous inspection potential risks to pupils' safety were not identified, assessed or acted upon quickly enough. Pupils were not taught how to take age-appropriate and reasonable risks.
- In the action plan the proprietor undertook to assess fully the site and facilities and arrangements for off-site visits, and put in place procedures to manage risk. The proprietor also undertook to give pupils more responsibility for managing the risks involved in using mobile phones and social media.
- Risk assessments are in place for all routine visits to off-site venues, such as weekly visits to the local swimming pool and fitness centre. Risk assessments consider the personal development needs of pupils as identified on statements or EHC plans.
- Boarding pupils appreciate the relaxation of the rule about mobile phones, and understand the trust placed in them to manage carefully and safely the risks involved in their use.

Part 5. Premises of and accommodation at schools

Paragraphs 25, 27, 27(a), 28(1), 28(1)(b)

- These standards are now met. At the previous inspection the quality of lighting in the learning areas and the washing facilities and toilets in the boarding facility were found to need significant improvement.
- In the action plan, the proprietor undertook to update the premises and improve the quality of facilities.
- Significant improvements have been made to the boarding accommodation and teaching facilities. Lighting is now controlled appropriately, and hot and cold water are provided in the washing and toilet facilities. A changing area has been added to an existing shower room to provide pupils with extra privacy. Toilet and washing facilities are now checked daily by the school's head of care.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i)

- This standard is remains unmet. At the previous inspection not all of the individual needs of pupils identified on their statements or EHC plans were being met. Some pupils were not receiving their entitlement to therapies set out by their local authority.
- In the action plan, the proprietor undertook to consult with councils and parents about changes to its procedures for charging for services, ensuring that the school stipulates the spending for each pupil's placements, and provides individualised invoices.

- Senior leaders set a standard, fully inclusive charge for the accommodation, provision, food and additional therapies for pupils registered with the school by each local authority. They feel that as each local authority has a contract with the school, which does not require separate charges, the demands of this standard, particularly the level of administration involved in providing local authorities with separate accounts for each pupil, are too demanding for a small school to carry out efficiently and effectively. However, this is a requirement of the independent school standards that this school currently does not meet. Senior leaders have not fully considered how this process could be streamlined to provide this information in a manageable, cost-effective way.
- The school does provide an annual review of pupils' EHC plans. The quality of these reviews is compromised by the lack of systematic, rigorous procedures to monitor and report upon the progress made by all pupils. Senior leaders do not monitor rigorously the quality of therapeutic provision, or the impact it has on pupils' learning and welfare. The newly appointed coordinator of special educational needs has begun to audit the additional therapies and support provided for each pupil, to gauge the coverage and quality of provision. This is at an early stage of development.

Part 7. Manner in which complaints are handled

Paragraph 33, 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii)

- This standard is now met. At the previous inspection inspectors noted a lack of trust between pupils and staff, and senior leaders. Staff, pupils and parents could share their worries, but some of them felt unable to share more formal complaints.
- In the action plan, the proprietor undertook to alter the school's complaints procedures so that complaints and concerns could be addressed immediately and investigated thoroughly.
- The school has responded promptly to the issue raised in the previous inspection and improved its complaints procedures. Records show that complaints are logged and followed up in writing by senior leaders. Pupils told inspectors that they feel they can approach senior leaders about concerns they may have, and that action will be taken to resolve them.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)

- It remains the case that senior leaders do not ensure that all of the independent school standards are met. Contesting the outcome of the previous inspection has absorbed a considerable amount of their time. This has slowed the implementation of plans to improve the school.
- At the previous inspection, self-evaluation procedures were inadequate. School leaders and the proprietor had not monitored the school's work effectively, and did not have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They were unable to determine the quality of teaching, or if pupils were making sufficient progress. The strategic leadership of governors required improvement.
- In the action plan, the proprietor undertook to provide training for leaders to fulfil their monitoring roles. Plans also included actions to increase the effectiveness of the proprietor and the governing board to gain a greater understanding of the school's work.
- Senior leaders' monitoring of the school's work has increased since the previous inspection, but their evaluation of its effectiveness remains underdeveloped. Self-

review lacks rigour and detail, particularly about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and what is needed to improve them. Senior leaders are not fully aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Without this information they are unable to formulate clear plans for improvement and target resources towards those areas that need it most.

- Senior leaders' views of the school's performance remain overgenerous. For example, they feel that teaching is good overall, even though a significant proportion of teachers are known to be ineffective. Self-evaluation and improvement planning are not sufficiently focused on meeting all of the independent school standards or the areas for improvement raised in the previous inspection. The action plan has been amended and approved, but the overall action plan has not been updated to include key milestones by which progress can be measured.
- The roles and responsibilities of the wider leadership team are developing. The leadership team includes a coordinator for improving teaching and learning, and another to develop the curriculum. Currently, there is no coordinator to lead improvements to the assessment of pupils' performance. Leaders are beginning to demonstrate that they have the skills and knowledge needed to promote improvements. For example, their increased monitoring of teaching, including lesson observations, scrutiny of teachers' planning and marking, and moderation of pupils' work, is leading to improvement because staff are being held much more accountable. Pupils recognise the impact of this, saying that marking is now more regular and provides them with clear advice about how to improve their work.
- Recent changes to the governance of the school have made little difference to improving the strategic leadership of the school. The executive principal, and the headteachers of the school and its sister school in London, constitute the senior leadership team and the governing body. It remains unclear how this arrangement presents a clear, objective view of the school's performance, or how senior leaders are held fully accountable for securing improvements.
- Little progress has been made in developing effective links with other schools to learn from their good practice, particularly in teaching, learning and assessment, and self-review. Arrangements to moderate pupils' work exist with the school's sister school in London. Further scope exists to broaden links and enable staff to gain a detailed comparison of pupils' outcomes.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection

- The proprietor must ensure that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, is drawn up and implemented effectively, and
 - take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those with an EHC plan
 - where the school has pupils above compulsory school age, a programme of activities which is appropriate to their needs
 - all pupils have the opportunity to learn and make progress (paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(2)(g), 2(2)(h)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the teaching at the school:
 - enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and make good progress according to their ability so that they increase their understanding and develop their skills in the subjects taught
 - involves well-planned lessons and effective teaching methods, activities and management of class time
 - shows a good understanding of the aptitudes, needs and prior attainments of the pupils, and ensures that these are taken into account in the planning of lessons
 - demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter being taught
 - demonstrates that a framework is in place to assess pupils' work regularly and thoroughly and use information from that assessment to plan teaching so that pupils can progress (paragraph 3, 3(a), 3(c), 3(d), 3(e), 3(g)).
- The proprietor must ensure that a framework for pupil performance to be evaluated, by reference to the school's own aims as provided to parents or national norms, or to both, is in place (paragraph 4).
- The proprietor must ensure that: where a pupil wholly or partly funded by a local authority (except where funding is solely for free of charge early years provision in accordance with the duty contained in section 7 of the Childcare Act 2006) is registered at the school, an annual account of income received and expenditure incurred by the school in respect of that pupil is provided to the local authority and, on request, to the Secretary of State where a pupil with an EHC plan wholly or partly funded by a local authority or other body through public funds is registered at the school, such information as may reasonably be required for the purpose of the annual review of the EHC plan is provided to the responsible local authority (paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(h), 32(1)(i)).

- The proprietor must ensure that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role and fulfil their responsibilities effectively, so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b)).

The school now meets the following independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school and such arrangements have regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools or, where applicable, the national minimum standards for residential special schools or the national minimum standards for accommodation of students under eighteen by further education colleges (paragraph 8, 8(a), 8(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12).
- The proprietor must ensure that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified (paragraphs 16, 16(a), 16(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that the school premises and the accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured (paragraph 25).
- The proprietor must ensure that the lighting in each room or other internal space is suitable, having regard to the nature of the activities which normally take place therein (paragraph 27, 27(a)).
- The proprietor must ensure that toilets and urinals have an adequate supply of cold water and washing facilities have an adequate supply of hot and cold water (paragraph 28(1), 28(1)(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure that a complaints procedure is drawn up and effectively implemented which deals with the handling of complaints from parents of pupils and which
 - provides for a written record to be kept of all complaints that are made, whether they are resolved following a formal procedure, or proceed to a panel hearing, and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld) (paragraph 33, 33(j), 33(j)(i), 33(j)(ii)).

School details

Unique reference number	124890
DfE registration number	935/6058
Inspection number	10022305

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

Type of school	Independent special school
School status	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	41
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	13
Number of boarders on roll	17
Proprietor	Michael Murphy
Chair (CEO)	Dr Duncan Rollo
Principal	Dr Duncan Rollo
Annual fees (day pupils)	From £16,000
Annual fees (boarders)	From £25,000
Telephone number	01449 736404
Website	www.centreacademy.net
Email address	admin@centreacademy.net
Date of previous standard inspection	9–11 February 2016

Information about this school

- Centre Academy East Anglia is registered with the Department for Education (DfE) to take a maximum of 50 boys and girls, including 29 places for boarders. There are currently 30 boarders. The school's registration allows for a maximum of eight pupils between the ages of four and seven years. There are currently no pupils within this age range.
- Pupils' special educational needs include dyslexia, dyspraxia, Asperger's syndrome, autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The vast majority of pupils have

a statement of special educational needs or an EHC plan, and most pupils are funded by their local authorities.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the previous full inspection in February 2016. It was carried out with no notice.
- The school's initial action plan was submitted to the DfE in June 2016. The initial action plan submitted to the DfE required some modifications to ensure that it was compliant and that the weaknesses were fully dealt with. Revised plans for improvement include actions to strengthen health and safety procedures, including risk assessment, improve the quality of accommodation and facilities, extend curriculum and enrichment provision, and enhance the rigour and frequency of senior leaders' monitoring and evaluation. The DfE accepted the proprietor's modified action plan with modifications in August 2016.
- A range of teaching was observed. During visits to lessons, inspectors looked at pupils' work.
- The DfE asked Ofsted inspectors to consider the school's response to two complaints received by Ofsted.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation and action planning, monitoring records, behaviour and incidents logs, training records, and policies relating to risk assessment and the arrangements to safeguard pupils.
- Meetings were held with the executive principal, headteacher, senior leaders, a speech and language therapist, and the coordinator of special educational needs.
- Inspectors met with a group of day pupils and a group of boarders. Inspectors also held conversations with a few individual pupils who asked to speak with them.
- The views of parents were gained from the 21 responses to Ofsted's online Parent View survey.
- A full inspection of the provision for boarders was carried out by Ofsted at the same time as this progress monitoring inspection. A separate report is published on Ofsted's website and is available from the school.

Inspection team

John Mitcheson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jenny Carpenter	Ofsted Inspector

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