

# Eaton Hall Specialist Academy

Eaton Hall School, Pettus Road, Norwich NR4 7BU

## Inspection dates

19/09/2016 to 21/09/2016

## 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

Outstanding 1

## Summary of key findings

### The residential provision is good because

- The children continue to make progress academically, socially and behaviourally as a result of the service that the school provides.
- Leaders and managers are inspirational, modelling a commitment to high aspirations for the children, which the staff recognise and duplicate.
- The residential provision is an integral part of the whole school. There is a joined-up, seamless approach to meeting children's needs.
- There is a commitment to ensuring that children are safe. The staff are clear on sources of advice and guidance.
- The children participate in a range of stimulating recreational activities.
- Research informs practice, with the service implementing new models of intervention as a result.
- Feedback from external professionals is consistently very good. The school has good relationships with families and is flexible in meeting their needs.
- There are areas of practice that the school could improve further. In one instance, monitoring of physical intervention records has not identified an issue that should have been followed up. Leaders have not evaluated the effectiveness of the overarching learning and development programme.

## **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 monitoring arrangements are strong enough to identify any discrepancies between the action taken in regard to physical interventions and the national minimum standards for residential special schools. When these identify incongruities, ensure that there is a record of the follow-up action.
- Undertake a formal evaluation of the overarching learning and development programme.

## Information about this inspection

This inspection was announced in the morning, and two inspectors arrived at the school within four 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 executive headteacher, head of school, deputy headteacher 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

|                |                            |
|----------------|----------------------------|
| Ashley Hinson  | Lead social care inspector |
| Margaret Burke | HMI, social care           |

# **Full Report**

## **Information about this school**

Eaton Hall Specialist Academy is a day and residential special school, with partially wooded grounds, located in a residential area of Norwich. It is purpose built and largely single storey. The boarding accommodation comprises 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 who have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school was last inspected in February 2016.

## Inspection judgements

### The overall experiences and progress of children and young people

**Good**

This is a good residential provision with outstanding features. The children make progress as a result of the support that they receive in the school. The children who board make significant progress in terms of their educational attainment. While some children do not sustain this level of progress once residency ends, there is still improvement from their starting points. An external professional said: '[Boarders] make massive progress, and feel safe and secure.' This progress makes a real difference to the lives of children. A child who has recently left the school stated: 'It is thanks to the staff I am confident, that I am the way I am.'

There have been minimal staffing changes in the residential setting since the last inspection. This increases the stability and consistency that children experience and underpins the positive, trusting relationships that staff build with children across the school. The staff know the children and understand their behaviour and potential triggers. There are clear strategies in place to reduce difficult behaviours and support the children's social and emotional development. Parents report that their children make progress in these areas. One parent said: 'In mainstream education, he was excluded and physically restrained. He has not had to have that here.'

There is a joined-up approach across the whole school service. The residential service does not exist in isolation. Joint working takes place with the staff working in classrooms. There are regular meetings between education and care staff, both in terms of daily handovers and half-termly reviews of the children's progress. As a result, the children receive a seamless, consistent service.

The staff seek the children's views about the service they receive. A school council is in place, and the staff involve the children in reviewing their plans. The children have the opportunities to engage in a wide range of social and leisure activities within residential provision. These include physical and intellectual pursuits. The children like these activities, and this contributes to their enjoyment and happiness in the school.

The school takes safeguarding seriously, and staff are aware of whom to contact should they have concerns about the safety of children. Leaders and managers are confident and inspirational. The staff report that managers lead them well.

Leaders and managers are committed to ensuring that staff receive the training that they need to meet the needs of the children. When necessary, managers source specialist training for staff. While there are a significant number of staff who are yet to achieve an appropriate qualification, the majority have begun working towards this through a structured induction process. The current induction process is under review. However, no formal review of the effectiveness of the current overarching learning and development programme has taken place.

The quality of care and support that the school provides is outstanding. Children receive the high-quality care that they need. Plans are in place for the children. The headteacher reviews and monitors against these. The staff ensure that parents and children are able to contribute to reviews.

The school works hard to build strong and effective relationships with external professionals. Leaders and managers seek expert advice and input relevant to the children. Professionals give outstanding feedback about the quality of the service provided. They consistently identify the commitment of the staff and how well they know the children.

The quality of the building is variable across the different sites. The off-school site is a more homely environment, whereas the school units are less so. However, the building is clean and tidy, and children have access to individual bedrooms and appropriate washing and bathing facilities. The school dining area is sufficient. Appropriate development plans are in progress to improve the decor.

The children are able to engage in activities in the school and in the wider community. The school has links with the local football club, which enables the children to participate in sporting activities. The children engage in physical activities throughout their time in the residential provision. The staff and children access local resources routinely. Arrangements for healthcare are sufficient. The responsible staff have taken additional actions since the last inspection to strengthen healthcare processes. For example, there are now clearer records concerning the induction of staff in medication processes.

The school provides children with a range of healthy, home-cooked meals. There are occasions when they provide special menus, for example, a special meal for the queen's birthday, and a week focusing specifically on healthy eating. The children report that the food is good. The mealtimes are appropriately social occasions. These are boisterous and animated within the units, with staff maintaining authority without dampening the children's enthusiasm. In the off-site accommodation, mealtimes are social occasions, which lend themselves to mature interactions and discussions about pertinent issues of the day.

The children have access to strong pastoral support. Consequently, they are able to talk to staff about things that concern them. The school is implementing a research-based intervention model to support children to develop their social and emotional well-being. The whole school is embracing this. The pastoral resource is a central, yet routine element of the service. Systems are in place to enable more discrete access to support, should children require or request this. As a result, the children are able to discuss concerns with the staff as a matter of course.

The children are able to contact their parents if they wish. Parents report that children call them and that they are able to call their children. The staff are in regular contact with parents, and parents report good communication with the school. When the staff struggle to get hold of parents by telephone, they write to them. The staff are seeking new and imaginative ways to keep parents involved.

The school has good safeguarding practice. The school maintains a log of child safeguarding concerns. The staff are aware of the need to share any concerns about the safety of a child with designated staff. They know whom to contact and are aware of a range of alternative people, should that person not be available. Leaders ensure that new staff are provided with information about the process.

When the staff observe discriminatory behaviour, they challenge this. For example, records show that the staff challenge racist behaviour. This has led to a reduction in individual instances of racist behaviour. Work takes place with children to increase their awareness of internet safety. The staff receive training in radicalisation. They also receive training in female genital mutilation. This reflects the school's whole-family approach as, while the school accommodates only boys, staff recognise that the boys are parts of families with sisters and of social groups that include female friends.

The staff provide children with clear boundaries. They manage behaviour in an unobtrusive manner. They achieve a balance, enabling children to express energy and exuberance while maintaining appropriate control. The staff talk about being able to discuss behaviour management strategies with colleagues. As a result, the behaviour of children is generally good in the residential provision. For example, no children have gone missing from the residential provision since the last inspection. There is also a reduction in missing incidents in the wider school. These have reduced from 42 in 2014–2015 to 28 in 2015–2016.

Regular fire drills and fire tests take place in the residential provision. The school follows safe recruitment processes. Appropriate checks take place and references are sought. When staff leave the school, exit interviews take place. These are open and offer the service the opportunity to learn from valuable feedback. These systems protect children from predictable risks.

On occasions, the staff need to physically intervene to keep children safe. When physical interventions take place, the staff complete records. The staff seek the views of the child involved. When the child wishes to discuss the incident further, the staff enable them to do so.

Leaders and the manager access and incorporate research into the service. This includes undertaking research on particular conditions that children are diagnosed with.

The staff are aware of the need for physical intervention to be a last resort. However, in one case, the physical intervention that took place was not in accordance with the requirement of the national minimum standards. This intervention related more to the maintenance of good order. Leaders and managers monitor the records but did not identify or address this issue.

Suitably trained and experienced leaders and managers effectively and efficiently lead the residential provision. A passionate management team works hard to try to provide the highest-quality service. As a result, the staff have high expectations for the children. Decisions about placements in the school are child focused. One professional said: 'Placement breakdowns are rare because they take such care with admissions.' This enables children to settle and feel secure.

The staff make positive attempts to involve parents in the life of the school and in the children's care. The school knows the children well and is willing and flexible, adapting to support social care plans to provide stability and consistency. For example, two children have had their residential nights increased by the school in order to provide support to the families for child-focused reasons. This supports partnership working with families, and will be part of the reason why there have been no complaints since the last inspection.

The school has effective governance in place. There are regular and structured governors' meetings and appropriate sub committees. The governors are committed and appropriately involved in the running of the school. They scrutinise plans, performance and arrangements and provide challenge to the leaders and managers. The chair of governors is known to staff and children, is approachable and is visible around the school. The governors have high expectations and a clear focus on both the present and future direction of the school.

The school has responded to the recommendations to improve practice made at the last inspection. The quality of independent monitoring visits has improved. The appraisal system is effective, and senior staff are attending supervision training to further consider alternative models.



## 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 exceed the standard of good and result 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's 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 their care and experiences are poor and they are not making progress.  |

## School details

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 139099   |
| <b>Social care unique reference number</b> | SC038324 |
| <b>DfE registration number</b>             | 9267015  |

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.

|   |                               |
|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>                       | Residential special school    |
| <b>Number of boarders on roll</b>           | 25                            |
| <b>Gender of boarders</b>                   | Boys                          |
| <b>Age range of boarders</b>                | 7 - 13                        |
| <b>Executive headteacher</b>                | Valerie Moore                 |
| <b>Date of previous boarding inspection</b> | 09/02/2016                    |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                     | 01603 457480                  |
| <b>Email address</b>                        | office@eatonhallacademy.co.uk |

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