

Centre Academy East Anglia

Brettenham, Ipswich, Suffolk IP7 7QR

Inspection dates

30 January – 1 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Sixth form provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have successfully addressed previous weaknesses. They have ensured that sound systems are in place to monitor, evaluate and review the school's effectiveness.
- A newly formed group of middle leaders has allowed the senior leaders to become more strategic. These middle leaders have the potential to make a major contribution towards ongoing school improvement.
- The school provides a safe and secure environment for pupils. They leave the school well equipped for the next stages of their education.
- Pupils experience good-quality teaching. Teachers use effective systems to assess pupils' progress and use a wide range of strategies to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils make good progress in their learning from their individual starting points. Some teaching does not consistently stretch and challenge the most able pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and as they move around the school is good. They enjoy positive relationships with their teachers and are considerate of each other's views and opinions.
- Pupils are provided with a wide range of roles and responsibilities. However, the role of the school council is not yet fully developed. Consequently, pupils cannot contribute fully towards school improvement.
- Pupils are offered a wide range of subjects and appropriate qualifications. They enjoy the variety of extra-curricular activities and clubs on offer to them.
- The sixth-form provision equips students very well for the next stage of their education and the world of work.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. They have a good understanding of fundamental British values.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

- The school meets the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching consistently meets the needs of the most able pupils by:
 - providing an appropriate degree of challenge in lessons.
- Make leadership and management outstanding by:
 - continuing to develop the skills and contribution made by the recently formed senior management team.
- Develop the role of the school council so that the role has greater purpose beyond fundraising.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school's senior leaders have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school improvement plan rightly identifies what the school needs to do to sustain current progress.
- The principal and the headteacher work well together to create a happy school in which pupils feel valued and are encouraged to reach their potential.
- Senior leaders have become more strategic in their approach. The formation of an extra tier of leadership through the senior management team has provided senior leaders with more opportunities to plan for, and deliver, school improvement.
- Procedures for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the school's effectiveness are well established. These include observations of teaching and learning, scrutiny of pupils' books and measuring the effectiveness of the school's curriculum.
- The proprietors and senior leaders have ensured that all of the independent school standards are met.
- The school has a suitable safeguarding policy published on its website.
- Teaching is well managed. This is particularly important as many teachers teach subjects outside their particular specialism. Inspectors' scrutiny of senior leaders' records of teaching over time show that strengths and weaknesses are identified and appropriate support is offered. Inspectors concurred with senior leaders' evaluations when conducting joint observations.
- Teachers' performance is managed well. Formal observations of teaching take place as part of these arrangements and appropriate targets are set, the progress towards which is monitored during the course of the year.
- The choice of subjects made available to pupils is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the independent school standards. Pupils are able to gain qualifications which match their preferred style of learning.
- A good choice of extra-curricular activities enhances learning beyond the classroom. Pupils particularly enjoy the Wednesday evening health and safety activity arranged by the local fire service, which teaches them about first aid and how to keep safe.
- Parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, expressed positive views about the school. One parent wrote in praise of the school: 'My son has made fantastic academic progress since joining Centre Academy East Anglia in September 2013, and his belief in his ability to learn has increased hugely.'
- The school reports to parents on pupils' progress regularly. These reports are detailed and informative and leave parents fully informed about how well their child is progressing and what they should do to improve.
- Promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. Pupils are actively encouraged to support one another in lessons and to understand right from wrong. They have a good understanding of what constitutes modern British society and the role they can contribute as good British citizens.

- The recently formed senior management team are being empowered to contribute towards school improvement, but there is potential to develop their roles further.

Governance

- New and improved arrangements for governance have been put in place since the previous inspection. The governance of the school is carried out by the principal, the headteacher and the headteacher of Centre Academy London.
- The addition of the headteacher of the London school provides for the views and experience of a governor who is not directly involved with the running of the East Anglia school, and hence provides more objectivity.
- Governors meet regularly to discuss the school's performance and minutes of these meetings reflect a sufficient amount of detailed and strategic discussion.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding underpins the school's core values and all staff have received up-to-date training in matters relating to keeping children safe.
- Staff demonstrate a good awareness of the risks associated with neglect, abuse and exploitation. Pupils told inspectors they feel well cared for and would have no hesitation in speaking to a member of staff about matters which are of concern to them
- Records relating to vulnerable pupils are well maintained and actions taken are suitably recorded with details of any resolution.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and effectively convey their enthusiasm to their pupils. Because relationships between teachers and pupils are positive, very little teaching is interrupted by low-level disruptive behaviour. This contributes towards the good progress made by pupils.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to test pupils' understanding of what they are being taught and to deepen their understanding. Teachers have responded positively to recent training on open-ended questioning and now routinely use this approach to see how well pupils are able to demonstrate their understanding.
- Teachers typically plan well for the learning needs of most pupils in their class. This is crucial as groups are arranged based on pupils' levels of maturity and ability to make progress, rather than purely on age.
- Teachers use a wide range of strategies to meet the needs of pupils. These include word frames for pupils who struggle with literacy and extension work for some of the most able pupils. This ensures that pupils make at least good progress over time.
- Teachers incorporate targets from statements of pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities or who have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) when planning for learning. This ensures that the needs of these pupils are better met than was previously the case.

- Reading, writing and communication skills are taught well. Pupils are provided with lots of opportunities to read aloud in lessons. They typically do this with confidence and expression.
- Additional adults in the classroom, such as the learning support assistant, play an important role in making sure that pupils understand the work and approach their work calmly and with purpose.
- Systems to assess pupils' progress are now well established. Testing on entry to the school ensures that leaders and teachers are able to establish an accurate starting point. Regular assessments of pupils' progress, including an end-of-year test, ensure that leaders compare pupils' progress with pupils who have similar starting points nationally.
- Homework is set in line with the school's policy and enables pupils to consolidate their learning.
- Some teaching does not consistently meet the needs of the most able pupils. This means that some of these pupils could achieve even better than at present.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are taught through well-planned personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) lessons about how to keep themselves safe. Effective use is also made of tutorial time to discuss problems and address any issues of concern to pupils. Career advice and guidance also feature in the time they have with their tutors.
- The school readily involves external support agencies to work with its many vulnerable pupils. Pupils with low self-esteem have been successfully supported to overcome matters relating to a lack of confidence or self-belief. Pupils value the designated areas in the school where they can receive one-to-one counselling or advice.
- The school's leaders ensure the welfare of pupils through carefully evaluated risk assessments, both for the day-to-day running of the school as well as for trips and excursions. All of the required checks for the Fire Safety Order (2005) have been carried out.
- Pupils have a comprehensive understanding of different forms of bullying, although they say that bullying is a rare occurrence in the school. Should any incidents of bullying occur, they are confident that they would be dealt with swiftly and efficiently.
- Although pupils are given leadership roles and responsibilities, the role of the school council is currently limited to raising funds for charities and does not give pupils the opportunity to express their views or contribute to school improvement.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Incidents of serious misbehaviour are unusual. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning in lessons and appreciate their teachers' efforts.

- Pupils move around the school between lessons and during their breaktimes with great consideration for their peers. They are well supervised by members of staff and socialise well with one another.
- The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and staff are well trained to manage the very rare incidents when behaviour is unacceptable.
- Pupils take pride in how they present their written work. They also wear their school uniform smartly. The school is free from litter and graffiti.
- Pupils are punctual to school and arrive at lessons well equipped and ready to learn.
- Exclusions from school are few and far between and this sanction is only used when all other means of support have been exhausted.
- Many pupils who attend Centre Academy had a history of very poor attendance at their previous school. Although pupils' overall attendance at the school remains below average, it represents an improvement compared to how regularly they attended their previous schools.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points compared to pupils who have similar starting points nationally. This is because they typically experience good-quality teaching and have positive attitudes towards their learning.
- Pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or who have an EHCP make good progress because their needs are met well through the teaching they receive. Work is adapted well to make sure pupils can access what they are being taught. For example, pupils who are dyslexic have specially adapted worksheets so that their progress is not hindered.
- In 2017, all pupils were entered for GCSE qualifications and achieved a 100% success rate. Although few achieved the higher grades, this represented good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils in key stage 2 make good progress in reading, writing and in mathematics and this progress continues as they move into key stage 3.
- Work in pupils' books across a range of subjects and covering all key stages indicates a good rate of progression, gains in the development of key skills and positive responses to teachers' guidance and support.
- Pupils read often, including a range of different types of books. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy reading and they understand how reading regularly broadens their vocabulary and improves their communication skills.
- Pupils receive good-quality pastoral support: they develop well socially and emotionally, which supports their learning and progress.
- Pupils are prepared well for the next stages of their educational career. They typically move on to college, apprenticeships or sixth forms.
- Occasionally, some of the most able pupils are not consistently stretched and challenged by the teaching they experience.

Sixth form provision

Good

- Students in the sixth form make good progress because the teaching they experience is consistently effective and motivates them to achieve well.
- A wide range of different teaching styles encourage independent thinking skills and build students' confidence so that they make good progress over time at rates to suit their individual needs.
- Students develop skills and knowledge which equip them well for progression to the next steps of their education.
- The sixth form is well led and the quality of the provision is routinely evaluated through observations of teaching, discussions with students, analysis of data and students' destinations.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and opens up wider opportunities for students from a range of different starting points. Students follow an American-based diploma which is assessed through coursework, rather than examinations. This approach minimises any undue anxiety, and allows students to flourish.
- All students in 2017 progressed to further study, including a range of universities, to study courses across a range of subject disciplines.
- The academic and personal, social and emotional development of students is well considered. The sixth-form students act as excellent role models to other pupils in the school. They have positive attitudes in lessons and are enthusiastic learners. They support younger pupils with their learning and take part in musical productions.
- Careers information and guidance is of good quality. This is tailored to meet the needs of individual students. Students are knowledgeable about different routes they might wish to follow when they leave the school. They also appreciate the opportunity to do work experience. This improves their confidence and develops their social skills well.

School details

Unique reference number	124890
DfE registration number	935/6058
Inspection number	10043519

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	Other independent special school
School category	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	45
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	6
Number of part-time pupils	0
Proprietors	Michael & Margaret Murphy
Chair	Dr Duncan Rollo
Headteacher	Kim Salthouse
Annual fees (day pupils)	£18,000–27,000
Telephone number	01449 736404
Website	www.centreacademy.net
Email address	admin@centreacademy.net
Date of previous inspection	9–11 February 2016

Information about this school

- Centre Academy East Anglia is registered with the Department for Education to take a maximum of 50 boys and girls, including 29 places for boarders.
- The school's registration allows for a maximum of eight pupils between the ages of four and seven years. Currently there are no pupils in this age group, including in the early years foundation stage.

- The school had its last full inspection in February 2016 and was judged to be inadequate. This was followed by two progress monitoring inspections in September 2016 and April 2017.
- Pupils' special educational needs include dyslexia, dyspraxia, Asperger's syndrome, autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The vast majority of pupils have EHCPs or statements of special educational needs, and most of them are funded by their local authorities.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has in the past admitted students over the age of 19.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place with one day's notice. The inspection looked solely at the educational provision. Inspectors observed a range of lessons, some of which were jointly observed with the principal or the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with the principal, the headteacher and middle leaders, including the designated lead for safeguarding and the assessment coordinator.
- Discussions were held with members of the school council and three other groups of pupils, including students from the sixth form.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including policies, information on pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance data and information relating to health and safety.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons and also conducted a more detailed scrutiny of pupils' books across all year groups and a wide range of subjects.
- The school's single central record of recruitment checks of the suitability of staff was scrutinised.
- Inspectors considered the responses of 18 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as 13 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

John Daniell, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Christine Dick

Her Majesty's Inspector

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