

Centre Academy East Anglia

Church Road, Brettenham, Ipswich IP7 7QR

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Centre Academy East Anglia is a residential special school located in the Suffolk village of Brettenham, between Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds. It provides education for a maximum of 50 boys and girls and includes 14 places for residential pupils. The residential accommodation is in two buildings on the school site. The residential provision operates for five nights per week during term time, for pupils aged from nine to 19. Pupils' conditions and disabilities that lead to their having special educational needs include dyslexia, dyspraxia, Asperger syndrome, autism spectrum disorders and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The school was last inspected in April 2017.

Inspection dates: 2 to 4 October 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **good**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **requires improvement to be good**

The residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of previous inspection: 25 April 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Key findings from this inspection

This residential special school is good because:

- The children are happy and make progress.
- The children feel safe.
- The staff act on children's concerns.
- There are good relationships between the staff and the children.
- The staff are ambitious for children.
- The children enjoy the healthy activities on offer.

The residential special school's areas for development are:

- Leaders and managers must ensure that safeguarding policies are up to date.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that policies in relation to children self-administering medication are followed.
- Internal monitoring and governance should provide scrutiny and challenge to ensure that weaknesses are identified and procedures are followed.
- Fire risk assessments should be undertaken by staff who have specialist knowledge in fire safety.

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standard(s) for residential special schools:

- 3.8 All medication is safely and securely stored and proper records are kept of its administration. Prescribed medicines are given only to the children to whom they are prescribed. Children allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so.
- 11.1 The school ensures that: arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of children at the school; and such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

Recommendations

- Ensure that leaders' and managers' scrutiny of the care provided is strong enough and invites challenge to identify shortfalls and to drive improvement.
- Ensure that fire risk assessments are undertaken by staff who have specialist knowledge.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

This is a good school. The children make progress because of the support that they receive from the staff. However, there are several shortfalls that centre on the broader leadership and management of the provision. Although these shortfalls have not affected the children, unchecked they have the potential to do so.

The children are happy in the boarding provision and described it as a 'sleepover'. They enjoy the friendships and opportunity to participate in external activities. Each child has a go-to adult. The children said that they feel safe. They are confident that their go-to adult will follow up on issues on their behalf.

The children make progress with their education and their independence skills. The children said that they learn new skills to help them when they move on. A parent said, 'Boarding has increased his self-reliance, helped him to grow up and he now feels more responsible.'

The children develop friendships at the school. The children generally get on well with one another. They make progress with their socialisation.

The children get on well with the staff, who support them. The small staff team knows the children well. Parents reported that their children feel less anxious in the school. A parent said, '[My child] is less stressed, and his biting has stopped as he is happier.'

The staff are ambitious for the children. Former pupils are invited back to share their experience with current pupils. This helps to instil ambition and aspiration.

The staff encourage the children to develop positive self-images. Case records are positive about the children.

The school provides the children with planned routine activities four days a week. The children said that they enjoy these healthy activities.

The staff support new boarders well. Families reported that introductions to boarding are well managed. The children said that the staff help them if they feel homesick.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

The children said that they feel safe and supported by staff. They said that they can report their concerns to staff and that staff act on their concerns and support them. Parents reported confidence that their children are safe.

An experienced and competent designated safeguarding lead manages most of the

safeguarding concerns. The lead ensures that incidents are recorded and that follow up takes place.

There are occasions when safeguarding concerns are managed by other designated staff. For example, when an allegation was made against a staff member. On these occasions, records are not clear or comprehensive. As a result, it was necessary to gather further evidence from external agencies and the management team to show that satisfactory action had been taken. The monitoring arrangements are not effective to ensure that actions are taken in line with policies and that clear records are kept.

The children said that the staff understand their needs. The children are taught to understand their anxieties and behaviour, which helps them to develop strategies to manage these better.

The children are supported to keep themselves safe. They said that 'mean' behaviour is not tolerated. If incidents occur, staff act to support all children involved. Good records are made of interventions.

The children's behaviour is consistently good. The staff manage behaviour without recourse to physical interventions and they use de-escalation techniques successfully.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Leadership and management need to improve. Although there are some strengths in the management team, this inspection has identified a number of shortfalls that centre on managerial weaknesses.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that important policies are up to date or, in one instance, followed.

The safeguarding policy and the child protection policy have not been updated to reflect changes in statutory guidance. Although reviews of these documents are in progress, they have not been undertaken in a timely way. As a result, staff are not in possession of clear policy and procedural guidance on issues such as peer-on-peer abuse and contextual safeguarding.

The staff do not formally risk assess self-administration of medication, including controlled drugs, by children and young people. This conflicts with the school's own policy and with national guidance. Internal management monitoring has not identified this omission. Despite this, there has been some improvement to the arrangements for managing medication. Staff competence to administer medication is now assessed and the medication policy has been updated.

An independent person visits the school each half term. They provide good reports on the quality of care and offer some challenge to leaders. Governors meet regularly

and discuss relevant strategic matters. However, these meetings do not offer sufficient challenge or scrutiny to identify shortfalls and to drive improvement.

Fire drills and fire tests now take place at the frequency that the provider expects. The children can say how they would react if an alarm went off. A fire risk assessment has been undertaken. However, this has been undertaken by staff who have no specialist knowledge in the field of fire safety. This potentially limits the accuracy and effectiveness of the risk assessment.

The staff receive supervisions and annual appraisals and have access to training opportunities. The boarding staff have attended training on managing self-harm and safeguarding.

Parents spoke as highly of boarding and care staff as they do of the school as a whole. A parent said, 'The school is like a family, not intimidating.' Parents noted the improvements in their children's confidence, independence and happiness. Communication between the school and parents is strong.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the school knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

Using the 'Social care common inspection framework', this inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC024588

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Mrs Kim Salthouse

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspectors

Ashley Hinson: social care inspector (lead)
Margaret Burke: social care inspector



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