

# Inspection of Gable End

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Inspection dates: 19 to 21 September 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils join the school having experienced significant disruption to their education. Many have not been in school for long periods of time, with some having experienced trauma in their lives. Here, pupils receive an education that is carefully designed to meet their needs. Their emotional well-being is given top priority; they are guided and supported by adults who care deeply about them.

Adults take time to get to know the needs of pupils, and what makes them tick. Pupils learn a curriculum that is well matched to their needs, interests and ambitions. They are guided to take responsibility and behave well. Incidents of misbehaviour, which can be frequent, are carefully managed by well-trained staff. Pupils are safe in school.

Pupils form a strong bond with Frosty, the school rabbit. He is much loved, and pupils take responsibility in meeting his needs. Opportunities to make a difference to local charities are plentiful. Pupils gain valuable experience of helping others.

Pupils learn to stay safe and develop essential life skills needed for adulthood through the highly effective personal development programme. By the time they leave, they are markedly better equipped to succeed in the world.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Pupils learn a highly personalised curriculum. This helps them develop the academic knowledge they need for their next steps, along with broadening their experiences and life skills. When pupils join the school, accurate assessment of what they already know and can do helps guide the curriculum they will learn. Many go on to study GCSEs, as well as acquiring functional skills qualifications along the way. The curriculum sets out the important knowledge pupils need to learn to attain these ambitious endpoints and gain important qualifications for their future.

Teachers design activities to help pupils acquire and practise their new knowledge. In geography, for example, pupils acquire a growing understanding of the physical and human features of popular holiday destinations, and of their location in the world. They use this knowledge, drawing on what they know from other subjects too, to plan their 'dream' holiday. While teaching assistants are highly skilled and well trained to manage pupils' behaviour, they currently do not have sufficiently well-developed knowledge and skills to be highly effective in supporting pupils' academic learning.

Opportunities for pupils to read are plentiful. The regular 'book club' allows pupils to read for pleasure and discuss their books with one another and adults. If pupils join the school having found reading tricky in the past, teachers provide precise guidance to help them catch up.

In the main, pupils behave well. They respond to the rewards and reinforcement of their positive behaviour because these are meaningful and relevant. Pupils are supported to behave in a respectful manner. Staff understand and apply the clear behaviour policy extremely well. There do remain times when pupils display violent and aggressive behaviour. When this is the case, adults draw on their extensive training to help them de-escalate situations extremely well.

Leaders have identified, with precision, exactly which personal, social, health and economic skills pupils need. They ensure that pupils learn and can use these. Pupils flourish as a result. Lessons provide opportunities to learn about relevant themes and topics that impact their lives. For example, pupils learn how to manage their own emotional well-being, the dangers of alcohol and drugs and about sexual health. Pupils produce thoughtful and considered responses to tasks set by teachers. Difference is celebrated. Whether through the curriculum or the wider opportunities provided, pupils recognise and celebrate their differences. Discrimination is not tolerated by pupils.

The therapy provision in school complements the academic and personal development curriculum. The school provides these experiences in a coherently planned way. They considerably strengthen the school's offer to pupils.

Leaders provide well-tailored careers guidance for pupils. This becomes more individualised as pupils move through the school. Work experience, such as working in a local café or volunteering at an alpaca sanctuary, helps pupils to experience what the wider world has to offer for them.

Members of the proprietor body work closely to ensure that leaders are challenged to make the school even better. The strong oversight ensures that the school meets all the independent school standards. The buildings and school grounds are well kept and safe. They provide pupils with a safe environment in which to learn. The proprietor body ensures that the school complies with the Equality Act 2010.

While the proprietor body and the headteacher have an accurate view of the strengths and weakness of the school, teachers who hold responsibility for individual subject areas have less well-developed knowledge and skills to monitor and evaluate their provision. They have not yet had the time or training to help them identify with clarity what is working well and what needs to improve further.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### **What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Some teaching assistants do not yet have sufficiently well-developed knowledge and skills to support pupils' learning in the academic curriculum. They do not

always provide precise and useful support to help pupils learn. Leaders should ensure that they provide training to help teaching assistants improve their knowledge and skills in the academic curriculum to be able to support pupils with their learning as well as they currently do with pupils' pastoral needs.

- Some teachers who are responsible for subject areas do not have the knowledge and time to effectively check the quality of provision in their area of responsibility. This means they do not always have a clear and precise view as to what is working well and what needs to improve. Leaders should ensure that they provide these staff with the appropriate training and guidance they need to develop their role.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	130855
<b>DfE registration number</b>	935/6085
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267611
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Proprietor</b>	Care Focus Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Timothy Leigh
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hazel Newton
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£68,068 to £81,012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01449 770 690
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.carefocus.co.uk">www.carefocus.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:admin@carefocus.co.uk">admin@carefocus.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	5–7 February 2019

## Information about this school

- The school is an independent school operated by a proprietor body, Care Focus Ltd. The main site is at Gable End, with a second site at Birchbrook House.
- The school does not currently use supply staff.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- Pupils often join the school, and sometimes leave the school, at very short notice.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 7 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school received its previous standard inspection in February 2019, when it met all the independent school standards. At that time, the school's overall effectiveness was judged to be good.

## Information about this inspection

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

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, citizenship and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, head of quality assurance and head of therapeutic services. The lead inspector held a meeting with three members of the proprietor board, including the chair, along with holding telephone conversations with representatives of two local authorities.
- Inspectors toured the premises at both school sites to review the suitability of school buildings.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents, pupils or staff. To gather these views, inspectors spoke formally and informally to these groups during the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Nathan Lowe, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sue Cox

Ofsted Inspector

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