

Inspection of a good school: Sidestrand Hall School

Cromer Road, Sidestrand, Cromer, Norfolk NR27 0NH

Inspection dates:

7 to 9 November 2023

Outcome

Sidestrand Hall School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Sidestrand Hall School is a welcoming, inclusive community. Pupils quickly settle into school life. This is because adults take the time to know pupils' complex individual special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The well-planned curriculum builds pupils' knowledge, confidence and independence. Pupils and students in the sixth form are well prepared for life beyond the school gates.

Positive relationships between staff and pupils feature throughout the school. Staff know pupils' unique backgrounds. As a result, staff support pupils well with their behaviour and emotions. Pupils have someone to talk to if they find aspects of school life hard. Pupils make friends and play well together. Staff deal with the sometimes tricky behaviour swiftly and effectively. This means that, overall, pupils behave well and can focus on school life.

Visits, trips and clubs enhance pupils' positive school experience. Pupils enjoy cooking, gardening and outdoor learning within the extensive grounds. Pupils learn about relevant topics such as budgeting, safe travel and healthy living. Trips into the community help pupils put their learning into action. Pupils get high-quality careers advice and guidance. This supports pupils' transition into appropriate destinations when they leave the school.

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

The recently improved curriculum is well designed to meet the specific needs of pupils with SEND. The curriculum contains a suitable range of subjects similar to the national curriculum. Each curriculum area is sequenced and pupils' knowledge builds over time. The school's four 'phases' helps pupils to access a curriculum tailored to their unique needs. The curriculum enables pupils to access a range of suitable qualifications by the time they reach Year 11 or the sixth form.

In each phase, staff adjust their lessons effectively. This helps to ensure that pupils can access the learning. The school's documents outlining pupils' needs help staff to understand what works well in the classroom. Staff regularly check on pupils' learning to

see what pupils can do and remember. This supports staff further to adapt lessons and the curriculum effectively to meet the changing needs of individual pupils.

Due to the recent curriculum changes, some assessment does not always match the knowledge taught in class. This does not help the school to know which parts of the curriculum are working well and where further improvements need to be made. The school's plans to address this issue have only just started.

Books feature prominently in the curriculum. Pupils read often. They meet a wide range of varied texts suited to their abilities. Books promote discussion in the classroom about themes such as diverse cultures and different eras. Staff adapt stories and make them engaging for pupils. The staff are trained appropriately to help pupils learn to read. The phonics curriculum is adjusted effectively to meet pupils' needs.

The school works closely with a range of different agencies and the residential provision to ensure pupils' needs are met. Staff training increasingly focuses on appropriate theories and techniques that equip staff to manage pupils' behaviour and learning effectively. This means that staff know and use appropriate strategies to de-escalate challenging situations. The 'Elm' team and 'Willow' provision supports pupils well to return to, and engage with, their learning. Overall, pupils behave with consideration and respect towards each other and staff. Pupils value the school's approach and rewards for behaving well.

Pupils have good attendance. This is despite many travelling considerable distances to get to the school. Staff know the pupils and their families well. Staff form positive relationships with parents and provide necessary support. This includes access to the high-quality residential provision.

The school's personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum contains a variety of suitable topics that help pupils, for instance, to stay safe online or form positive relationships with others. Pupils are respectful of others' differences and have a good understanding of diversity. As a result, the school community is inclusive and welcoming.

Pupils and students in the sixth form get to learn about the world of work and different careers. Students regularly engage in suitable work experience in partnership with local organisations and the school's charity shop. This fosters their resilience and independence, preparing them well for their next steps.

The governing body has an in-depth understanding about the school and residential provision. Individual governors check the work of leaders thoroughly. They test out what they are told. Staff feel well supported by the school. They access relevant training which helps them fulfil their varied roles and responsibilities.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some areas of the curriculum, assessment is not fully in place. It does not always match the key knowledge that pupils are learning. This prevents the school from fully understanding gaps in pupils' knowledge or evaluating what is working well in the curriculum. The school should strengthen assessment practices to align with the key knowledge taught, identifying gaps in pupils' learning effectively and supporting teachers to identify future curriculum adaptations.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2015.

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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	121254
Social care unique reference number	SC042606
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10295007
Type of school	Special
School category	Foundation special
Age range of pupils	7 to 19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	34
Number of boarders on roll	26
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Angela Wrighton
Headteacher	Shelley Taylor
Website	www.sidestrandhall.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school, and governing body, manage and oversee the on-site residential setting.
- The residential setting consists of four houses, catering for 26 pupils.
- The school does not use the services of any alternative providers.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan (EHC plan). The school provides specialist education for pupils with a range of needs, including severe learning difficulty, moderate learning difficulty and autism. Some pupils have multiple needs.
- Many pupils join the school at different points in their school life.

Information about this inspection

- 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 the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- This inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of the residential provision. Therefore, several meetings were conducted jointly with inspectors from social care.
- Due to the nature of the specialist curriculum, inspectors carried out deep dives in the following areas: literacy (including reading), PSHE education (including relationships and sex education), computer science and mathematics. In each area, inspectors met with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at evidence of pupils' work.
- Inspectors scrutinised EHC plans for pupils across different classes. The lead inspector considered the school's work by examining case studies of different pupils.
- The lead inspector held meetings with external agencies such as the local authority and a representative from the educational psychology team.
- 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.
- Inspectors spoke to a range of pupils across all three days of inspection. Inspectors spent time with pupils at lunchtimes and breaktimes to observe behaviour and speak to pupils about school life.
- The lead inspector considered the 36 responses made by parents to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including 35 free-text responses. The lead inspector also considered 55 responses to Ofsted's survey of staff.

Inspection team

Damian Loneragan, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Joanna Pedlow

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023