

Eagle House (Norfolk)

Independent Special School

Inspection Report

DCSF Registration Number	926/6152
Unique Reference Number	135066
URN for social care	SCO63266
Inspection number	334298
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell
Social care inspector	Dorrit Andrews

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 (as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005). The inspection of boarding was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000.

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 08456 404040

www.ofsted.gov.uk



Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, in order to advise the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

An inspection of the boarding provision was also carried out. The full report on this provision is not published but may be obtained from Ofsted by telephoning 08456 404040.

This was a light touch educational inspection (LTI) which focused principally on the quality of education provided by the school; its provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and the improvements the school has made since its last inspection.

Information about the school

Eagle House School (Norfolk) is registered for 90 boys and girls between the ages of 4 and 19 years, of which 40 may board. There are currently 29 pupils on roll aged between 8 and 19 years. All, except one overseas pupil, have a statement of special educational needs identifying an autism spectrum disorder and severe learning difficulties. Many of the pupils have challenging behaviour. The school provides residential accommodation and the large majority of pupils stay at the school all year round. Seven pupils are weekly boarders during term times. The school is located on a 30 acre site in rural Norfolk with buildings grouped to resemble a village. The site includes a separate college which provides post-19 educational provision. The school's aims are *'to create an environment that ensures and promotes the well being of each individual in a safe and secure setting in which they can live, work and develop their personal potential and communication skills that will help them in later life'*.

The school was last inspected by Ofsted in July 2006.

Evaluation of the school

Eagle House School provides a good quality of education which meets the needs of pupils and effectively supports their good progress in lessons and in their personal development. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' progress is the result of the commitment, dedication and expertise of the school's leaders, managers, teachers, teaching assistants and residential staff. Pupils are well cared for. Parents' are given good support and their visits to the school are always welcomed. Parents expressing a view about the school strongly support its work with their children. The school meets most of the regulatory requirements for independent schools.

Since its last inspection the school has improved the range of information provided to parents, although parents are not yet informed that they may obtain details of staff on request. Fire drills are not appropriately recorded.

Quality of education

The curriculum, based on the 'Eagle House Approach', is good. This approach is expertly designed to develop the communication and social interaction of autistic pupils, provide for their severe learning difficulties and manage challenging behaviour. The requirements of pupils' statements of special educational needs are well met. Lessons and activities are well devised to develop pupils' communication skills, increase their independence, and reduce the anxieties that they regularly experience. Each pupil has a personalised learning programme which effectively informs the daily planning of their work and activities. The curriculum benefits from being set out in clear policies and written guidance. Planning is strengthened by the use of a range of other schemes of work such as the Entitlement and Quality Education for pupils with Learning Difficulties (EQUALS) and its 14-19 programme, 'Moving On'. These contribute effectively to the relevance of pupils' work and activities and to achieving the targets in each pupil's individual education plan and student support plan.

Planning for each pupil's academic and personal development is closely integrated. It is flexible and responds effectively to the different needs of each pupil. The impact of planning benefits significantly from the cooperation between teachers and care staff and the good range of support and advice from therapists, psychologists, occupational therapists, speech and language therapists and other professionals. Through a strong multi-disciplinary approach the school ensures the good breadth and balance of learning opportunities in the school day, in residential hours and through the many additional enrichment activities which promote good progress. Pupils' progress is supported further by carefully planned trips into the local community, for example to the supermarket and to the local swimming pool.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is planned appropriately into each pupil's personalised learning programme. The broad range of PSHE topics contribute well to pupils' personal development. These prepare pupils well for the next stage of their lives by developing their independence and social skills. This is further supported by links with the local Connexions careers guidance service. Where possible pupils are given work experience which, due to the nature of their difficulties, is conducted within the school and residential provision; for example setting the dining room or office skills. The school recognises that there is opportunity for further development of the 14-19 curriculum, mentioned in the previous report, to extend students' learning opportunities. Information and communication technology is used where relevant to meet pupils' needs and there are firm plans to extend its use in the school.

The quality of teaching is good and is occasionally outstanding. Teachers and classroom assistants demonstrate a strong commitment to pupils. Teachers plan meticulously to meet the needs of individual pupils within the carefully structured lessons. As a result of the support they receive most pupils make progress in relation to their autism, severe learning difficulties and challenging behaviour. Because of the nature of their difficulties, pupils' progress is in small steps and the generally good progress made by most pupils, particularly in terms of communication and social skills, owes much to the expertise and hard work of teachers, their assistants and care staff.

The substantial training provided by the school ensures teachers understand the pupils' learning difficulties and how to manage effectively their challenging behaviour. Teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils. The multi-disciplinary approach and regular meetings of the team of professionals contributes effectively by deepening teachers' understanding of some of the complexities in dealing with pupils' development. Learning support assistants are kept well informed about the needs of pupils and they play a key role in supporting teachers. Teachers and learning assistants work together effectively and develop positive relationships with pupils.

There is a good framework in place for assessment, which is effective in identifying progress and achievement. As a result, planning is well informed by the ongoing evaluation of pupils' progress. A good multidisciplinary baseline assessment contributes key data for the review of pupils' progress. The recording and evaluation of progress is thorough. The school has recently introduced external moderation of assessments to assure their accuracy. In weekly reviews, teachers examine evidence of small steps of progress within P-scales, used for pupils who are working below National Curriculum levels and, where it is appropriate, National Curriculum levels. This ensures an appropriate level of challenge in pupils' work is maintained and the assessment record makes valuable contribution to pupils' annual reviews. Reports are made to parents regularly.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence effectively because the school implements clear strategies to improve the communication and social interaction that help pupils' personal development so well. Similarly, well planned systems are in place for developing pupils' understanding of right and wrong and to encourage their good behaviour. Instead of sanctions, the school effectively uses a system of 'consequences' to clarify when a form of behaviour is unacceptable. The active encouragement of good behaviour works very well and staff show great patience in guiding pupils. As a result, behaviour is good.

The staff's strong efforts help to make pupils feel part of the school and the local community. Pupils are encouraged to value their community and their relationships with staff and fellow pupils.

They contribute to the school by helping with everyday jobs and improve their awareness of their local community through visits to the shops, local sports amenities, adventure parks, trips to the coast and the cinema. They are encouraged to support charities, for example Red Nose Day. Pupils' experience of public institutions has been developed through a visit by the fire brigade, and in the context of their personal development, by visits to the barber, the doctor and the dentist. The school provides a harmonious and tolerant community. It responds well to requests for special diets linked to religious observance and to provide access to worship as requested by parents.

Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety

Procedures adopted for supporting pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory overall. In practice pupils are well cared by a committed staff and are encouraged to be healthy. Parents say that they feel that their children are happy to be at the school. The school has implemented a policy to safeguard pupils. It meets the requirements for ensuring that the suitability of new staff is checked before they begin to work and the required checks are recorded in a register. A plan related to disability access sets out how the school would respond to particular needs and circumstances. The school was not able to provide written evidence of recent fire drills.

Effectiveness of the boarding provision

The residential provision was judged to be satisfactory, and National Minimum Standards were met. A full report on this provision is available on application to Ofsted.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school meets all of the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2003 as amended January 2005, with the exception of those listed below.

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety (standard 3) and must:

- maintain a written record of fire drills (paragraph 3(5)).

The school does not meet all requirements in respect of the provision of information for parents, carers and others (standard 6) and must:

- ensure that parents are aware they can request details of the number of staff employed by the school and their qualifications (paragraph 6(2)(k)).

What the school could do to improve further

While not required by the regulations, the school might wish to consider the following points for development.

- Develop the curriculum provision for 14–19-year-olds to extend their learning opportunities.
- Develop the use of information and communication technology to further enhance learning opportunities.

Inspection Judgement Recording Form

outstanding	good	satisfactory	inadequate
-------------	------	--------------	------------

The quality of education

Overall quality of education		√		
How well the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of pupils		√		
How effective teaching and assessment are in meeting the full range of pupils' needs		√		
How well pupils make progress in their learning		√		

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Quality of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development		√		
The behaviour of pupils		√		

Welfare, health and safety of pupils

The overall welfare, health and safety of pupils			√	
--	--	--	---	--

The quality of boarding provision

Evaluation of boarding provision			√	
----------------------------------	--	--	---	--

School details

Name of school	Eagle House (Norfolk)		
DCSF number	926/6152		
Unique reference number	135066		
Type of school	Special		
Status	Independent		
Date school opened	May 2005		
Age range of pupils	4–19		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 27	Girls: 2	Total: 29
Number of boarders	Boys: 27	Girls: 2	Total: 29
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational need	Boys: 27	Girls: 2	Total: 29
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 27	Girls: 2	Total: 29
Annual fees (boarders)	£225,000		
Address of school	Mill Road Banham Norwich Norfolk NR16 2HU		
Telephone number	01953 888656		
Fax number	01953 887021		
Email address	principal@eaglehousenorfolk.co.uk		
Headteacher	Mr J Shaw		
Proprietor	Mr Paul Conrathe		
Reporting inspector	Michael Thirkell		
Dates of inspection	7–8 July 2009		