

# 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 day and residential special school located in Suffolk. It is privately owned. The school caters for children and young people aged between seven and 19 who have special educational needs that include autism spectrum disorders.

There are 54 pupils on roll. The total number of residential pupils is currently nine. Residential pupils can board between Sunday and Friday for up to five nights.

The residential provision comprises two building on the school site.

An integrated inspection took place in September 2018.

**Inspection dates:** 24 to 26 September 2019

**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 **good**

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

**Date of previous inspection:** 2 October 2018

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good



## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good**

The children thoroughly enjoy the boarding experience. They value the school and recognise the positive benefits of boarding. The residential staff team develops meaningful relationships with each child. Consequently, the children feel secure and develop a sense of value and belonging.

The children make good academic progress. The staff provide structured help with children's homework, and this boosts their study skills and confidence. The children's attendance and engagement in the classroom improve considerably. For many children, this is a significant personal achievement.

Children who experience social difficulties start to build and sustain friendships. One parent said, 'My child has school friends who visit our home. This has never happened before.'

The children benefit from an embedded evening routine that provides predictability, structure and certainty. They take part in a range of engaging and energetic activities that develop their life skills, such as swimming and cycling. Volunteers from the local fire service enhance the activity programme. Their input helps children develop resilience and perseverance. This significantly improves the children's independence and helps them to recognise their potential.

The school is located in an idyllic, rural setting. Generous grounds provide a safe space for the children to play and have fun outside. The children benefit from an indoor games' room that encourages social group activities.

The staff actively encourage the children to personalise their bedrooms. The children said that these are comfortable. However, communal areas, including the dining area and the girls' showers, are worn and the decor is dated. These areas detract from an otherwise homely environment.

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

The children confidently said that they feel safe and that the staff understand them as individuals. Bullying is not a concern. The children confidently said that bullying is not tolerated, and this helps them feel secure. Every child can readily identify a trusted adult to approach and share their worries or concerns with.

Staff use their individual knowledge of each child to distract and divert unwanted behaviours. Good relationships with children are the basis of this success. Restrictive physical intervention is not used.

The staff provide individual one-to-one discussions that help the children to learn

from their behaviours. A permanent speech and language therapist supports the staff to identify strategies to help children who face barriers.

The staff notice when the children are behaving well. They give praise and offer unconditional positive regard. The staff occasionally use reasonable sanctions. They actively help the children to identify personal targets to work towards. These effective approaches reduce the children's anxiety, helping their behaviours to improve.

The designated safeguarding lead maintains comprehensive records. These reference current statutory guidance. She works competently and professionally with colleagues and parents to address actual or potential safeguarding issues. The established procedures eliminate most risks and ensure that the staff understand reporting procedures. These safeguards help the children to understand how to keep themselves safe.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The head of boarding has been in post for four years and is qualified for the role. His knowledge, experience and professional insight enhance the children's boarding experiences.

Boarding is fully integrated into school life. The head of boarding is an active member of the senior leadership team. The leaders and managers continue to improve their monitoring systems. Unannounced monitoring visits and file audits ensure that the residential staff receive feedback about their work and have access to the relevant information and support.

Leaders and managers have high expectations of the children. Children are actively encouraged to share their views. A representation of boarding children sits on the school council. This forum ensures that the children's ideas and opinions are routinely considered.

The residential staff are a small, stable, bespoke team. They work effectively together and have good relationships with the teaching staff. The sharing of information supports the children's academic progress. The staff's knowledge of each child ensures that their approach is responsive to the child's needs. One member of staff said, 'We are like one big family living in one great big house.'

The independent visitor visits the school every half term offering suggestions and constructive challenge to the senior leaders. The relationships with parents continue to be extremely positive. Several parents spoke confidently about the school and the progress that their children make. One parent said, 'They [the staff] are amazing, and my child's life has been turned around.'

The residential staff benefit from good informal support and managerial supervision that help them to reflect on their strengths and areas for development. The staff have access to training and attend some workshops with the teaching staff. However, the leaders and managers have not set measurable targets for the staff's learning and development.

Managers and leaders have made several improvements and met the majority of the previous recommendations. A detailed fire risk assessment of the premises includes a comprehensive action plan and, although the staff are working on these actions, they are not yet complete.

## **What does the residential special school need to do to improve**

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure that the communal areas are decorated to a consistently good standard.
- Ensure that the expectations regarding learning and development are specific and measurable.
- Prioritise the outstanding actions from the fire risk assessment.

### **Information about this inspection**

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people 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:** Mrs Kim Salthouse

**Type of school:** Residential special school

**Telephone number:** 01449 736404

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## **Inspector**

Rosie Davie, social care inspector



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