

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 60 pupils on roll. The total number of residential pupils is currently five. Residential pupils can board between Sunday and Friday for up to five nights. The residential provision comprises two buildings on the school site.

The head of care has been in post for six years. They have the necessary experience and qualification for the role.

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), at the request of the Secretary of State, we suspended all routine inspections of social care providers on 17 March 2020.

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 September 2021

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account **requires improvement to be good**

How well children and young people are helped and protected requires improvement to be good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers requires improvement to be good

The residential special school is not yet delivering good help and care for children and young people. However, there are no serious or widespread failures that result in their welfare not being safeguarded or promoted.

Date of previous inspection: 24 September 2019

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: requires improvement to be good

Poor risk assessments and monitoring and failure to address fire safety concerns mean that the school requires improvement to be good. While restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have played a part, this does not account for all the issues identified.

Children make progress with their independence and their social skills as a result of staying at this residential school.

Children spoke positively about the staff who support them. The word that was recurring was 'kind'. Staff spoke with enthusiasm and positivity about the children.

Children feel that the staff 'get' them. Residential staff have a generally good understanding of the needs of the children. They understand their likes, dislikes and personality quirks. However, there is some limited understanding regarding children's experiences outside of school. This limits the depth and quality of risk assessments.

Children said that the staff listen to them and take their opinions into account. Children's views are sought before reviews. Children say that they can influence decisions and activities. They enjoy the balance between activities and down time.

Children benefit from good, home-cooked food. Their rooms are sufficient for their needs and have desk space for study. However, some areas of the accommodation were dirty and in need of cleaning. These areas compromised the homeliness of the environment.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

Children said that they feel safe in the residential provision. They said that bullying is not an issue. They are confident that staff will act and support them if they experience bullying. Female residential pupils said that they feel safe and can speak to staff if there are any concerns about the behaviour of male residential pupils towards them.

Risk assessments do not give enough consideration to risks. In addition, in some instances, individual risk assessments assert that there are no risks in a particular area when risks do exist. This is despite senior management oversight and sign off. Managers have accepted the need to make improvements and have begun to formulate plans to achieve this.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that a fire risk assessment written in July 2019 has been sufficiently acted on. As a result, some actions that were expected to

have been completed within three months have not been completed over two years later. This does not ensure that children are protected from harm as far as reasonably practicable.

Since the last inspection, a new designated safeguarding lead has been appointed. She has a good understanding of recent updates to legislation and guidance. She has received appropriate training and she has made changes to the recording and monitoring systems. However, these changes are new and it is too early to assess their effectiveness.

Although staff have a general understanding of the whistle-blowing process, it is not always apparent how staff could contact the proprietor if they had concerns. Managers made changes during the inspection to make this clearer for staff.

Residential pupils are polite and well behaved. There have been no behavioural issues in the residential provision. There have been no restraints and no residential pupils have gone missing from the school.

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

The head of care has been in post for six years. He has the necessary experience for the role. The staffing arrangements are sufficient for the number and needs of the children currently staying in the residential provision. The staff are long-standing and provide consistency for the children.

Management monitoring has not been strong enough. The independent visitor has not seen children during monitoring visits. No alternative approaches were taken when it was apparent that the visitor would not be able to fulfil the functions of the role. As a result, the safeguards intended by this role have not been realised.

Management monitoring has not ensured that policies and procedures have been updated and published on the school's website promptly. Senior managers began to address some of these issues during the inspection. However, the subsequently updated policies included errors and oversights. This means that staff do not have access to up-to-date policies that reflect current statutory guidance.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff have access to a good range of training opportunities. These include updates to statutory guidance. The new designated safeguarding lead has begun evaluating the training provided and monitoring its effectiveness. Although this monitoring and evaluation is in its infancy, it has enabled her to identify some gaps in staff's understanding and take steps to remedy this.

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 standards for residential special schools:

- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. (NMS 7.1)
- 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. (NMS 11.1)
- The school follows and maintains the policies and documents described in Appendix 1. (NMS 13.7)
- Most monitoring visits are carried out unannounced. They include: checks on the school's records of attendance, complaints, sanctions, use of reasonable force, risk assessments, and where they exist, individual care plans for children; evaluation of the effectiveness of the care provided to children and whether they are safeguarded; assessment of the physical condition of the building, furniture and equipment of the school; and opportunities for any child or member of staff who wishes to meet the visitor (in private if they wish). (NMS 20.2)

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that the decor of the residential provision is consistently cleaned and maintained to promote a homely environment.

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

Email address: admin@centreacademy.net

Inspector

Ashley Hinson, Social Care Inspector

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