

Eaton Hall Specialist Academy

Eaton Hall School, Pettus Road, Norwich NR4 7BU

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Eaton Hall Specialist Academy is a day and residential special school in Norwich that caters for boys with social, emotional and mental health needs. The residential accommodation is in a purpose-built building in the school grounds.

There are 52 pupils on roll, 25 of whom board up to four nights a week.

The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at the school.

The head of care has been in post since 2014 and has a relevant qualification.

The school is a member of the Broad Horizons Educational Multi-Academy Trust.

Inspection dates: 7 October to 9 October 2025

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: 30 September 2024

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Inspectors spent time with several children during the inspection. Children make strong progress and have an enjoyable and fulfilling time. They are supported by staff who have a thorough understanding of their individual needs.

Staff deliver high-quality, research-informed therapeutic support that is tailored to the individual needs of each child. This includes structured and responsive one-to-one interventions and therapy, which are provided by skilled practitioners. School leaders ensure that the therapeutic model is embedded across the school and extends to families. Targeted training is offered to both parents and children. This creates an inclusive approach to support children's emotional well-being.

School leaders closely monitor children's learning outcomes. Staff have recently collaborated with families to review children's educational and social targets, making them more purposeful. Good communication between residential and education staff ensures a consistent approach to children's learning. Residential staff support children's literacy through well-planned reading sessions. As a result, children's school attendance and engagement have improved from their starting points.

Children said that they are well cared for and have supportive relationships with staff. Children are proud of their school and gave positive feedback about how they enjoy spending time with each other and staff.

Families generally report good communication with staff and recognise the progress children make at the school. Some parents highlighted children's increased independence in their daily living skills that are evident in the family home following the support provided by staff.

Children enjoy a varied range of sporting activities and outings that reflect their interests. Structured on-site activities are thoughtfully organised and support children's creativity and sense of fun. Children take part in charitable and community projects such as litter picking and visiting elderly residents in care homes. This broad range of opportunities effectively supports children's social development and provides them with new and meaningful experiences.

Some children have identified medical conditions. Staff are familiar with individual health plans and work with the school's health lead. Medication is administered by trained staff. However, on one occasion, appropriate medical advice was not sought following a child's medication being missed. This left the child at risk of not receiving sufficient care to manage any potential side effects.

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

Child protection concerns are appropriately shared with external agencies. The designated safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding leads maintain effective oversight of safeguarding practice. Collectively, they work closely with residential staff and school leaders to discuss, monitor, and respond to emerging concerns.

School leaders have provided comprehensive training to staff which is aligned with new statutory safeguarding guidance. Staff receive additional training sessions regarding topics such as sexually harmful behaviour, online culture, misogyny, and exploitation. Consequently, staff are equipped to be alert to and respond to potential risk indicators for children.

Staff are skilled and confident in de-escalating potential behavioural incidents. They provide children with positive role models and demonstrate a balance of warmth and clear boundaries. Children respond to this well and their ability to manage their emotions significantly improves over time.

Children are engaged in a creative and established incentive program for positive behaviour in residence and the wider school. Children's achievements are routinely recognised, and they receive varied rewards and privileges. This scheme also forges helpful support networks between children, with children frequently encouraging one another to succeed.

There have been a few occasions when children have left the school site. Staff have responded appropriately, followed agreed procedures and have located children quickly.

There has been a clear reduction in the frequency of physical interventions being needed for children over time. School leaders use broad monitoring systems to identify trends and adapt children's behaviour support strategies accordingly. However, there are shortfalls in some of the staff's post incident support for children. On one occasion, a child's view of the restraint had not been promptly explored by staff who were not involved in the intervention. This compromises the reflective learning with the child. On another occasion the staff's action taken in response to a child's concerns following a restraint is not clear.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The head of care is highly experienced and suitably qualified. They provide effective leadership to staff alongside the deputy head of care and assistant head of care. They work in close collaboration with other school leaders, who share a collective ambition for children. Leaders are committed to a child-centred model of support that prioritises children's development and successful future outcomes.

School leader's internal development plans are comprehensive. Recent improvements include the recruitment of an additional residential staff member, which has eased

pressure on existing staff, reduced absenteeism, and minimised the need for staff to work additional hours. School leaders have taken account of children's views through house meetings and individual discussions. As a result, incentive schemes have been reviewed, the range of rewards expanded, and further recreational resources introduced in residential houses.

Trustees maintain effective oversight of the residential provision. The governor responsible for residence, alongside the inclusion lead, conducts regular visits and speaks directly with children. Trustees seek to learn from staff and actively consider children's views on their education and care. Their findings are integrated into the school's wider monitoring and review systems. Trustees undertake thorough safeguarding audits, which identify clear objectives for improvement. Areas such as the clarity of recording have been highlighted as developmental priorities, with targeted actions in place to strengthen practice.

School leaders ensure staff receive termly supervision sessions and an annual appraisal. Staff say that they feel well supported. However, some of these supervision sessions have not been effectively recorded. Records would benefit from further reflection on children's needs and scope to support staff's professional development. This variability in recording can hinder good monitoring of staff practice over time.

Staff benefit from a wide range of training, including advanced courses in therapeutic approaches and de-escalation strategies. This ensures staff are well equipped to support children's needs in line with the school's model of support. A high proportion of staff hold level 3 qualifications in residential care. However, an area for development is increasing staff's understanding of children's health conditions. In one instance, the emergency protocol plan and associated monitoring records were found to be limited for one child. This indicates a gap in staff's knowledge and skills in this area.

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 standard for residential special schools:

- Senior leaders should monitor the use of restraint and take appropriate action to prevent the inappropriate use of restraint. In particular, school leader's monitoring must be sufficiently strong enough to identify and respond to any concerns raised by children following incidents of restraint. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards 20.7)

Points for improvement

- School leaders should ensure that staff seek medical advice from a health professional when there are errors in the administration of children's medication.
- School leaders should ensure that staff receive appropriate training in responding to children's individual health needs.
- School leaders should ensure that the recording systems for staff supervisions are consistently effective and capture the depth of the discussions held.

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: SC038324

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Peter Lambert

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Inspectors

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