

Eaton Hall Special Academy

Pettus Road, Norwich, Norfolk NR4 7BU

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2018

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership. His clear vision ensures that the school is continually improving.
- Leaders and staff are relentless in pursuing the highest learning aspirations for every pupil.
- The chief executive officer of the Rightforsuccess Trust, alongside the governors, goes the extra mile to ensure that the school enables pupils to re-engage with education and experience success.
- Highly effective leadership at all levels ensures that pupils receive exceptional teaching and a curriculum matched extremely well to their learning needs and interests. This has an outstanding impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Leaders have developed sophisticated systems for assessing and tracking the progress of pupils that take into account their wide range of needs and abilities.
- All staff have consistently high expectations of the pupils. Pupils make excellent progress.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to learning due to the engaging topics studied.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and they told inspectors they really enjoy coming to school.
- All staff work together extremely well and in close partnership with outside agencies. This forms an exceptionally strong team of support around each pupil.
- Teachers are highly skilled at helping pupils to control their behaviour. Consequently, learning and lessons are rarely disrupted.
- From typically low starting points, pupils make outstanding progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and are resolute that they will succeed.
- Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education. They receive high-quality careers advice and guidance, ensuring that they make appropriate choices.
- Extensive extra-curricular activities develop pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
- The school works in close partnership with parents and carers, providing them with excellent support.
- Leaders have rightly identified the scope to share their outstanding practice with more schools.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:
 - the school continues to share their knowledge and expertise with an even wider range of schools to promote excellence in education.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The headteacher, the chief executive officer, the governors and staff have created a culture of excellence, ensuring that each pupil has the finest possible experience of schooling. They demonstrate an uncompromising commitment to ensuring the very best possible outcomes for pupils.
- The headteacher is relentless in his drive to continually improve provision. He is highly ambitious for every pupil and is determined that disadvantage must not limit ambition and determination. He has gained the respect, admiration and trust of the entire school community. Staff share the headteacher's extremely high expectations.
- Senior leaders and middle leaders are highly effective. Their vision, knowledge and skills ensure that the school's success is sustainable and does not depend entirely on the strength of the headteacher.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and honest. Leaders know the work of the school exceptionally well. Regular visits to classrooms provide leaders with a thorough understanding of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning.
- Staff understand and carry out their roles extremely well. Continuous professional development is used very effectively to ensure that staff are supported and challenged to achieve their very best.
- Leaders have developed a very strong assessment system to identify where a pupil is in their learning. The gathered information allows leaders to analyse pupils' learning very precisely in order to plan their next steps in learning. This demonstrates the vision and ambition of 'improving the life chances for all pupils' being 'at the heart of our Academy'.
- The first-class curriculum meets the needs of pupils extremely well. It is engaging and inspires pupils to learn and achieve their very best. The curriculum is flexible and constantly reviewed to meet pupils' needs. It is challenging and extends pupils' thinking, resulting in pupils' strong enthusiasm for learning.
- The curriculum provides a wealth of opportunities to develop pupils' skills in communication, literacy and numeracy. Visits to the steam museum and trips to coastal resorts in the summer expand the classroom learning environment to the outside world. Pupils also experience different cultural experiences, for example visiting the battlefields in France and a school in Holland.
- The pupil premium funding is spent extremely effectively. For example, highly rewarding experiences, such as residential visits, help to develop pupils' social and emotional skills. A range of therapeutic interventions also provides individualised support. Disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as their peers, and often better academically.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is spent effectively. The funding has been used to increase the range of sports clubs on offer. Pupils develop their self-esteem and interpersonal skills by participating in a range of activities, including swimming, skating, football and archery.

- The Year 7 catch-up funding and additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are used wisely. This ensures that all groups of pupils make the progress they should.
- The school prepares pupils for life in modern Britain extremely well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given the highest priority and permeates all aspects of school life. This approach encourages pupils to respect people from a wide range of backgrounds and with different beliefs.
- The school works exceptionally well with parents to ensure that their children receive the right kind of support when it is needed. Communication is a strength of the school and all parents who spoke to the inspectors said that they would recommend the school to other parents.

Governance of the school

- The chief executive of Rightforsuccess is highly ambitious and takes her role very seriously. She demonstrates an exceptionally high level of commitment to the school's pupils. The chair of governors has an excellent understanding of the school and works tirelessly to achieve the very best for pupils and staff.
- Governors bring a very wide range of professional experience to the school which enhances its development and drive. They regularly visit and are fully aware of the strengths and areas for development. They have a thorough understanding of data in relation to how well the school is doing.
- Governors carefully oversee the use of resources, including staffing, and are fully aware of the use and impact of pupil premium funding and other additional funding. They have the necessary skills to make sure that the school is financially stable.
- Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are monitored and scrutinised rigorously, and that the findings are acted upon effectively. Minutes of meetings show that they routinely ask challenging questions and that the safeguarding arrangements of pupils remain central to all aspects of the school's work.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. A strong culture of safeguarding pervades the school. Staff, irrespective of their role, know the pupils extremely well.
- All required checks are carried out when recruiting new staff to work with the pupils.
- Policies and procedures are kept up to date and are rigorously adhered to by all staff. Leaders have ensured that all staff have received and read the latest guidance on safeguarding, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2016).
- The designated safeguarding leads are up to date with their training.
- Leaders make effective use of other agencies and professional expertise to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe. They are exceptionally confident that leaders in school will help and support them with their worries and concerns. They are provided with extensive opportunities to develop their understanding of keeping safe,

as there is a progression in the content of topics over time.

- The risks involved in taking pupils off-site are fully assessed. The school site is secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Leaders and teachers have created an outstanding learning ethos across the school that enables pupils to develop a thirst for knowledge and to achieve highly.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding because it is consistently well matched to the vastly different personal needs of each pupil. Superb planning and meticulous record-keeping ensure that activities are set at the right level for all groups of pupils, including the disadvantaged. Pupils flourish in their learning, including the most able.
- High expectations and aspirations are promoted by teachers. Pupils respond with enthusiasm, embracing challenge and developing as resilient and independent learners. No time is wasted. Pupils work cooperatively with their peers and show the utmost respect for adults.
- A strong literacy culture has developed across the school. Pupils spoken to were eager to talk about their current reading book. Many pupils enjoy the adventure of reading and read on a regular basis outside of school.
- Staff have excellent levels of subject knowledge. They use imaginative resources to enhance learning. For example, pupils participated in the 'LEGO in Space' project. They were successful in constructing a craft that was launched into the atmosphere 12.8 miles above the earth, complete with a camera, tracker and LEGO crew.
- Teaching assistants provide just the right amount of support to individual pupils. They are empathic, providing the time for pupils to make a response. The proficiency of teaching assistants and their ability to step back when pupils are successful mean that pupils do not become over-reliant upon them. They learn to be independent.
- Pupils' progress across the different subjects is monitored diligently. The school's assessment systems are comprehensive and used consistently well by staff. Leaders and staff meet frequently to identify any underperformance and use assessment information effectively to ensure that pupils make rapid progress.
- Regular staff training is prioritised. Staff are urged to reflect on their teaching. They feel that they are given the support and professional development to refine their skills, and are encouraged to take risks and be innovative.
- Classroom routines are very well established. Pupils know what is expected of them and what they are supposed to do at different points of the day. As a result, transition between lessons is seamless and very little learning time is lost.
- Staff ensure that classrooms are welcoming so that pupils are encouraged to learn and try their very best. Displays of pupils' work demonstrate the pride taken in learning. Regular praise, verbal encouragement and guidance help pupils to deepen their curiosity, interest and understanding, and increase the tempo of learning.
- Parents are extremely positive about the quality of teaching. One parent expressed the views of many, stating, 'The staff are brilliant. They do a great job.'

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils wear their uniform with pride. They enjoy attending the school and value the support provided by staff.
- The vast majority of pupils are confident and articulate. Their positive views of the school are reflected in their responses to inspectors, with one pupil stating, 'I now enjoy coming to school and learning because I have teachers that understand me.'
- Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including gliding, bowling, the cinema and paintballing. These provide them with memorable experiences of education.
- All pupils have the opportunity to participate in active sport and have a clear understanding of how to live healthily.
- The premises and accommodation are exceptionally well maintained, clean and free from graffiti and litter. Pupils take pride in their school.
- Staff monitor the attendance and achievement of pupils that attend the alternative provider. It helps pupils to develop their self-esteem, confidence and motivation by participating in courses they enjoy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils move around the school purposefully and calmly. Lessons start punctually. Behaviour in lessons and attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils are fully engaged in their learning, listen carefully to each other's views and opinions and show a strong interest in the well-planned activities.
- Pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes around the site is exemplary. Pupils get on well together. Staff are highly visible and provide a wealth of activities to keep pupils engaged. Pupils are exceptionally polite and respectful to each other and to staff.
- All staff manage challenging behaviour with absolute consistency. Behaviour logs indicate that there is very little poor behaviour. When it does occur, it is dealt with swiftly.
- Following a pupil's admission, incidents of poor behaviour rapidly decline. The extremely consistent systems for ensuring outstanding behaviour are well understood by pupils.
- One taxi driver commented, 'They are good lads. They get on well with each other. They are well behaved in the cab.'
- Pupils with a history of poor attendance in previous schools are so keen to come to school that their overall attendance has improved significantly. Staff work closely with the pupil and their family to encourage full participation in school life.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- This unique school succeeds in changing the lives of pupils. Outcomes over time are excellent for all groups of pupils across all key stages. One parent stated, 'The school has given my son a future.'
- Pupils make exceptional progress in their social and emotional development. The way in which leaders record and monitor pupils' progress is excellent, leading to rapid progress.
- Teachers adapt their practice so pupils are able to access learning whatever their starting points. Consequently, they make rapid progress. There is no significant difference in the progress of different groups of pupils. Disadvantaged pupils thrive in this setting. They achieve at least as well as their peers and very often exceed them.
- Pupils benefit from the small classes and thrive in the positive learning environment. In the lessons observed, pupils understood what they were learning about and were clear about what they needed to do to improve.
- Leaders and teachers are quick to identify the additional needs of pupils. They are able to adjust the curriculum or provide additional support on an individual basis so that barriers to learning are removed.
- Pupils read books on a regular basis and make rapid progress in their reading. They are exceptionally articulate given their initial starting points.
- The school has a relentless drive on improving standards in writing. Pupils learn to write fluently and confidently due to the guidance and support provided by staff. Being challenged to produce extended pieces of writing is a regular occurrence in lessons across the curriculum.
- All key stage 4, pupils leave with a qualification in English, mathematics and science. Pupils achieve a range of GCSE passes and accredited qualifications from the broad suite of qualifications available. Pupils also have the opportunity to participate in work-related learning placements, enabling them to move on to appropriate destinations with relevant skills.
- Strong careers advice and information have ensured that all pupils are successfully prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. Pupils have meaningful destinations in place for when they leave the school. The school continues to support the pupil and the family for a further two years after the pupil leaves.
- A significant number of pupils make strong enough progress in their academic, personal and social development to be reintegrated back into mainstream schools. The school maintains contact with these pupils and supports families when needed.

School details

Unique reference number	139099
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10049034

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Special
School category	Academy special converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Roche-Kelly
Headteacher	Keith Bates
Telephone number	01603 457480
Website	www.eatonhallacademy.co.uk
Email address	office@eatonhallacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 February 2012

Information about this school

- Eaton Hall Special Academy opened as an academy special converter in December 2012. This is a day and residential school. The residential provision was inspected in October 2017, when it was judged to be good.
- There are seven schools in the trust, all within the Norwich area.
- Eaton Hall is the only Norfolk specialist academy catering for students with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.
- The current headteacher took up his post in the autumn term 2014.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- All pupils have an education, health and care plan for SEMH.
- Some pupils attend the alternative provider Easton and Otley College for one day a week to extend the curriculum opportunities. They attend courses in animal care and construction.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and other members of staff, the chief executive officer and three governors.
- Inspectors talked informally to pupils during lessons, breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors carried out observations, all of which were undertaken jointly with senior and middle leaders, across all year groups and in a wide range of subjects.
- Discussions were held with staff, including senior and middle leaders, classroom teachers and support staff.
- Inspectors analysed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation summary, the school development plan and minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors analysed the school's own assessment and tracking information, and carried out a work scrutiny.
- Records connected with the safeguarding of pupils were also examined.
- A telephone conversation was held with the virtual school headteacher for Norfolk.
- Inspectors held telephone conversations with parents and discussions with a group of parents at the start of the school day.
- There were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, for inspectors to consider. There were 19 responses to the staff questionnaire but no other survey responses.
- A range of responses to the school's own parental questionnaire, analysing the opinion of parents, was also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Stefanie Lipinski-Barltrop, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Melanie Hall

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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