

Sidestrand Hall School

Cromer Road, Sidestrand, Cromer, NR27 0NH

Inspection dates 25–26 February 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Sixth form provision		Good	2
Overall effectiveness of the residential experience		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Good leadership and management, including effective support from governors, provide well-targeted training for teachers that benefits pupils.
- The school meets the minimum standards for residential special schools. Residential pupils receive high quality care.
- Democracy is promoted well through the elected school council. Pupils are consulted on how to improve their residential experience.
- Pupils experience tolerance of other faiths and cultures. Through team work projects they develop good social skills.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils' understanding of how to keep safe in the work-place is good.
- Teaching is good. Relevant activities that focus on developing pupils' life and employability skills typify teaching.
- Pupils make good progress in English and mathematics.
- Sixth-form provision is good for the very few students who attend.
- Year 11 pupils leave school with qualifications and skills that make them ready for their next step in education or training.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Assessments of pupils are sometimes insufficiently used to set them activities at the correct level of challenge.
- On occasions, teachers and teaching assistants move in too quickly to support pupils rather than giving them space to complete an activity themselves.
- Safe recruitment checks are made, but there is some inconsistency in the way staff check references by telephone for potential residential employees.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 15 lessons taught by different teachers. All of these lessons were observed jointly with a member of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors examined pupils’ work across the school. They also listened to pupils read in lessons.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, key stage managers, head of care, residential staff and a clinical psychologist. Discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body and three other governors. Informal and programmed discussions were held with pupils during the school and residential time, and a telephone conversation took place with a representative of the local authority. In addition inspectors had telephone conversations with parents.
- Inspectors reviewed many documents, including those relating to pupils’ academic and social progress, school self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, curriculum and assessment, statements of special educational needs, pupils’ residential experience, and keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors took account of 32 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, together with the school’s own surveys of parents and carers. Inspectors also looked at 43 Ofsted questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Jeffery Plumb, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gary Anderson

Additional Inspector

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Social Care Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Sidestrand Hall School provides for pupils aged 7 to 19 with a range of complex needs (although designated for pupils' aged 3 to 19 existing arrangements are for pupils aged 7 to 19). It offers residential provision in two blocks of accommodation.
- The main school residential provision caters for 23 pupils who generally receive one to two nights in residence per week. The second residential provision, Clement Lodge, was opened in September 2013 for pupils on the autistic spectrum disorder. It caters for six pupils residing from Sunday to Friday.
- All pupils have statements of special educational needs. Their needs include moderate learning difficulties, behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder (this is severe for a minority of pupils, accompanied by complex learning difficulties and challenging behaviour) and speech, language and communication difficulties. A very few have disabilities such as severe learning difficulties, physical disabilities and additional medical conditions.
- In September 2014 the school opened primary and secondary provisions specifically for pupils with Asperger's syndrome.
- The school has been awarded a grant to build a 40-place post-16 provision, but this project has been delayed due to an ecology survey discovering that the site allocated was a pathway for crested newts. A very small sixth form opened in September 2014 based in a temporary building.
- The school has recently refurbished workshops for vocational courses in motor mechanics, construction and hair and beauty. These facilities are also used by 38 pupils from other schools (all of these students are taught by instructors and teachers at this school).
- There is a school charity shop in Cromer used to provide work-related experience for pupils.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- There is a plan to create an 'independence flat' to assist some of the older pupils with complex needs to experience living independently.
- Through a scheme called 'School-2-School Support' the school supports other schools across the county in supporting pupils with special educational needs and disabilities.
- There are more boys on roll than girls.
- An above average proportion of pupils receive the pupil premium, the additional government funding for those eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by their local authority.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and very few are from families who speak an additional language. However, the number of pupils from Eastern Europe families is beginning to rise.
- The school is part of a Cooperative Trust with nine other special schools in Norfolk. The initial partners are the local authority and the University of East Anglia. There is a Trust Board but each school has its own governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding in all subjects, so as to raise achievement, by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently use assessments about what pupils know and can do to set them work at the correct level of challenge to move them on to new learning
 - teachers and teaching assistants do not move in too quickly to support pupils but give them space to complete the work themselves.
- Set out and apply a consistent approach to making telephone checks on references for potential employees to the residential provision.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Governors, senior school and residential leaders have created a challenging and nurturing learning culture where all pupils have an equal chance to do as well as they can. Discrimination is tackled and all pupils enjoy equality of access to a wide range of experiences.
- The headteacher's vision to enable pupils with disabilities to overcome obstacles to learning and gain qualifications and skills that will make them employable is shared by all staff. The residential staff play an equal part in enabling each residential pupil to achieve his or her potential.
- Senior leaders and key stage leaders check the impact of teaching on learning. Based on their monitoring, teachers and teaching assistants receive training and also coaching in their classrooms. They respond enthusiastically and improve their practice.
- Leaders know their school. Their analysis of the school's provision and the residential provision is thorough. It is used to set targets for improvement. For example, following a recent investigation into why some pupils were not doing as well in an aspect of mathematics as they ought to, new resources were purchased and a training programme on teaching shape, space and measurement was launched. These pupils now make the same good progress as their peers.
- Most teachers use the school's new system for assessing how well pupils are doing to set work precisely to the needs of pupils, thus accelerating their learning. However, a few teachers are not yet using it consistently or quickly enough to set work at the correct level of challenge for pupils in their classes.
- Work by the key stage leaders, including the leadership of the recently initiated sixth-form, is good. The curriculum is relevant, broad and balanced. Clubs, outdoor adventure activities and residential activities (in the school's residential provision) as well as stay-away trips from school, enhance pupils' development of social skills, alongside promoting fun in learning. Recent modifications have been made to the National Curriculum changes to meet the needs of pupils.
- Key Stage 4 and post-16 students receive good guidance. Transitional reviews give strong, well-informed guidance on the ambitions of the pupils. The vocational subjects enable most Year 11 pupils to start out on Level 1 courses at college when they leave school. Good planning is in place to increase the qualifications for higher achieving Asperger's pupils admitted this year. At the same time careful planning provides good courses with qualifications for the few sixth-form students with complex needs. There is a plan to increase the sixth-form to provide for pupils who are not yet ready to go to college at the end of Year 11.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through lessons (called Thrive) pupils learn about spirituality and gain in confidence and self-esteem. They reflect in these lessons, and within capability, show spiritual insights. Many opportunities are provided to calm pupils and help them overcome anxiety, with soft music in the background and seating pupils away from distractions. Through experience of tasting foods from different cultures, pupils' awareness of cultural diversity is developed. Pupils have respect for each other's differences.
- Pupils' awareness of British values of tolerance and liberty is encouraged by sensitively enabling pupils who find it difficult to work as part of a group to engage in doing so. They listen to the views of others. They understand democracy as they put themselves forward to be elected onto the school council, giving short speeches about the contributions they would make. In the residential provision pupils meet and consult with staff about their provision. In these ways, in relation to their capability, pupils are prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good and meet statutory requirements. Leadership and staff are trained in sexual exploitation and domestic violence and put in place detailed risk assessments for pupils in vulnerable circumstances. Child protection procedures are robust. Risk assessments for fire and medical conditions are thorough and detailed. Although recruitment processes

follow safe recruitment guidelines, there is an inconsistent approach to making telephone checks on references for potential employees to the residential provision. Lack of clarity in expectations means that not all staff approach this in the same way.

- The school makes good use of its additional pupil premium funding. Those pupils who benefit from this reap the rewards of effective support, enabling them to make good progress.
- The primary physical education and sport funding is used wisely, and has enabled pupils to access horse riding, yoga and benefit from receiving professional coaches in cricket and football. The impact of this has been that pupils enjoy sport and it has made a valuable contribution to their physical fitness.
- Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents and carers are helped in managing their children's behaviour and the care staff support parents on visits to health clinics with their children.
- As befits a good school, support from the local authority is slight. It purchases expert special needs support for the school, which the leadership find helpful.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good.
 - Governors are frequent visitors and go into classrooms to support teachers. They support teaching and residential staff. They challenge senior leaders and recognise that with the new approach to assessing pupils they will be able to ask even tougher questions about pupils' progress. Governors are committed and regularly review their work.
 - Governors keep abreast of National Curriculum changes. They know about the quality of teaching and residential provision. They understand that only effective teachers can be rewarded and what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. There is a clear approach to checking how well the headteacher performs and governors set her targets aimed at improving pupils' achievement. All legal requirements for safeguarding are met. They ensure that all staff have read the 'Keeping children safe' document. They ensure that the minimum standards for residential provision are met.
 - They hold leaders to account for spending on premium funding, Year 7 catch-up-funding and primary sport funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Concentration in lessons is good because pupils are enthusiastic to succeed. In vocational subjects pupils engage with interest in relevant work-related activities.
- Teachers are skilled in helping pupils with autistic spectrum disorder overcome anxiety and focus on learning. On occasions when these pupils wander off task, they are swiftly brought back and re-engaged with learning. Speech therapists help them to communicate. As they do so their frustration dissipates and they behave much better.
- Residential pupils benefit from clear and consistent boundaries. These pupils modify their behaviour because of positive reinforcement from care staff.
- Modifications to furniture enable pupils with physical difficulties to reach the equipment they need to learn.
- The school is orderly and calm. There is no litter. Displays are looked after. The school receives positive feedback about its pupils' behaviour when they work in the school's charity shop in Cromer.
- Pupils value rewards for behaving well. When they misbehave they usually accept sanctions and work hard to improve their behaviour.

- There have not been any racist incidents or exclusions this year.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The residential care staff identify safeguarding concerns and intervene to ensure that risk assessments are thorough and detailed. Working with families, mental health services and the family support team they keep pupils safe.
- Visitors to school are carefully vetted. Trips out of school are scrupulously checked for safety.
- Pupils confidently say that they feel safe at school and in the residential provision. Bullying seldom happens and when it does it is dealt with swiftly. Pupils have a trusted adult in the school and in residential provisions to go to and share any concerns.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when using a computer. They know what hazards to be watchful for in the workplace and wear the right boots and clothing in the school's workshops.
- Attendance has improved since the last inspection. It is average. Most pupils attend regularly because they enjoy school. Strategies to improve attendance are good, like offering more residential provision to some pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- The impact of teaching on pupils' learning over time is good. Throughout the school, the teaching of English and mathematics is good, as is the teaching in the sixth-form. Teaching in the sixth-form focuses on the next stage of development for each student.
- Teaching of vocational subjects enables pupils to gain good work-related skills. It significantly develops pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. For example, in a construction lesson Year 11 pupils successfully learnt about the best pattern of bricks to build a strong wall, worked in teams and accurately measured the distance between the bricks they laid. They read instructions about the different patterns of bricks available to them.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and planning are good, as is their understanding of a wide range of special educational needs within their classes. This knowledge and understanding is used to good effect to help pupils learn, particularly in reading, literacy and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They help them to read accurately and understand mathematical concepts. They particularly help pupils who fall behind with their work to catch up.
- Most teachers use assessments on what pupils know and can do to set them new work so as to accelerate their learning. However, this is not yet sufficiently consistent across all classes. Sometimes assessment is not used to set activities at the correct level of challenge and on these occasions pupils do not learn as well as they ought.
- Occasionally, teachers and teaching assistants do not give pupils sufficient time to complete a task, moving in too quickly to offer support. For example, giving them a word they struggle with when reading rather than allowing them space to work out the word by themselves.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in English and mathematics. Attainment is different for each pupil reflecting their wide range of needs. By Year 11, one may get an Entry Level 1 in English, another a GCSE pass. It is a similar picture in mathematics. But for each pupil, this shows good progress from their starting points.
- Progress in reading is good. For some this means using pictures to read what they want for lunch, while for others it means reading text fluently. Writing ranges from making a mark with the support of a teaching assistant to writing prose and poetry with a reasonable degree of accurate spellings.
- Mathematics progress is good. Some Key Stage 3 pupils with complex needs struggle to identify numbers, while others solve problems using their own methods. All make good progress.
- Progress is good for the most-able pupils. By Key Stage 4, some of these pupils achieve a grade C GCSE pass in mathematics and a grade D GCSE pass in English. Some pupils with Asperger's syndrome (new provision within the school) in Key Stage 2 produce and perform high quality pieces of music and develop literacy and mathematical skills on a par with their mainstream peers.
- By Year 11, pupils gain good vocational qualifications to help them in their next step of development. Most go to college to study Level 1 courses in construction, motor mechanics and hair and beauty. A few return to school for further support for their next step of development.
- All groups of pupils make good progress including those eligible for the pupil premium funding and minority ethnic pupils. Year 7 pupils supported by catch-up funding make rapid gains in reading because of the support they receive.
- Pupils who benefit from the primary school physical education and sport premium make good progress in physical education. For some, good gains are made in developing muscle tone through a programme using a trampoline. Pupils participate in competitive sports with other schools and enjoy winning trophies.

The sixth form provision is good

- There are very few students. The leadership and management of the provision are good. Each student has a highly individual curriculum to meet their needs. There is a clear plan to develop the sixth-form, but it has been hindered by building problems. Part of the plan is to create a flat where pupils can learn how to cook, make a bed, use a washing machine and learn to clean so as to develop their life skills.
- In the meantime, the school uses temporary accommodation, while it waits for the sixth form block to be completed.
- Effective use is made of the school's charity shop to enable students to develop life skills. They experience how to manage money and develop work-related skills.
- Behaviour is good and students are taught how to keep themselves safe when travelling independently. Students take pride in being in the sixth-form.
- Teaching is good. Students are taught English, mathematics, physical education and suitable vocational subjects. Good use is made of a farm to enhance students' enjoyment of learning. They all receive good careers education. They learn how to shop and plan a meal on a tight budget. There is appropriate accreditation for the students.
- Because there are so few students an achievement judgement cannot be made.

Outcomes for residential pupils	are outstanding
Quality of residential provision and care	is outstanding
Residential pupils' safety	is good
Leadership and management of the residential provision	are good

- The national minimum standards for welfare are met.
- Residential staff work in close partnership with parents and carers and external professionals. These partnerships develop all aspects of supporting children and their families. Parents and carers and professionals speak extremely highly of the school. Parents and carers identify the positive impact the residential provision has on their children.
- Skilled staff identify individual needs and work hard to support each residential pupil to achieve his or her potential. Residential pupils make good progress in their social interactions. Their experience in the residential provision supports pupils to develop and maintain friendships. They develop tolerance and understanding of peers who have diverse needs and behaviours. Pupils develop their emotional well-being, readiness to learn and independence skills. Data provided by the school show that residential pupils meet and in some cases exceed their educational targets.
- Residential pupils benefit from access to a range of health services that support their physical, emotional and mental health.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

Residential provision		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	A school which provides an exceptional quality of care and significantly exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 2	Good	A school which provides a high quality of care that exceeds minimum requirements.
Grade 3	Adequate	A school which meets minimum requirements but needs to improve the quality of care it provides.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school where minimum requirements are not met and the quality of care has serious weaknesses.

School details

Unique reference number	121254
Social care unique reference number	SC042606
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	448007

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection of residential provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for residential special schools.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	4
Number of boarders on roll	29
Appropriate authority	Norfolk
Chair	Roger Billings
Headteacher	Sarah Macro
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2011
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