

The New Eccles Hall School

24 March 2017

The New Eccles Hall School, Eccles, Norwich NR16 2NZ

Overall outcome

Residential provision

The school does not meet all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

- On 28 September 2016, Ofsted undertook a full inspection of this school. At that inspection, the school was judged as requires improvement to be good. Leadership and management were judged as good. However, five national minimum standards were unmet.
- On 24 March 2017, a progress monitoring visit was undertaken. This was to evaluate the progress made in meeting the unmet national minimum standards.
- The visit found that the five previous unmet minimum standards are now met. However, three other national minimum standards are not met. These are primarily related to policies and procedures.
- The school is in the process of transitioning to the policies and procedures of the new owners. This transition has resulted in some confusion and, as a consequence, some policies are not up to date or consistent with practice in the school. Although these issues have not had an impact on the quality of care that the children and young people receive, they have the potential to do so if unchecked.
- Previously, risk assessments of the sleeping arrangements were not completed. The school's approach has improved. The risk assessments have been completed for all of the children, irrespective of whether they share bedrooms or occupy single rooms. Therefore, the previously unmet standard is met.
- The format used to capture these risk assessments affects their quality. School managers recognise this. The new form does not lend itself to considering the type of risks that need to be assessed as part of a risk assessment of the sleeping arrangements. In addition, the policy relating to 'pupil risk assessments' is out of date and has missing information. It does not reflect the new practice. Therefore, the school is not compliant with national minimum standard 13.7, which requires schools to maintain and follow up-to-date policies.
- Previously, the arrangements for food were not good enough. The quality and variety of food have now improved. New menus have been introduced, and healthy alternatives are available. Managers have involved the children in decisions about the new menu. Therefore, the previously unmet standard is met.
- The records relating to bullying were not sufficiently clear or detailed. These records have improved. A new paper system has been introduced to compensate for the limitations of the electronic system. The records that were sampled captured the incident and the subsequent action. Therefore, the previously unmet standard is met.
- Previously, the school's written agreement with people who lived on site but were not employed by the school was not consistent with the requirements of the national

minimum standards. All of the people aged over 16 who are not employed by the school but live on the school site have signed a new agreement. Therefore, the previously unmet standard is met.

- Previously, the management team had not identified some complaints about the service. Some improvement has taken place in regard to recording complaints, but further work is necessary. The school has captured complaints and the subsequent actions. Therefore, the previously unmet standard is met. However, the records of these are not consistently strong enough. For example, outcomes are not routinely captured, and the records have not been updated promptly. There is a lack of clarity about what constitutes a complaint; some concerns and correspondence that do not constitute a complaint have been recorded as a complaint. Therefore, the school is not compliant with national minimum standard 18.1, which requires schools to maintain and follow an appropriate complaints policy.
- In addition to monitoring the progress of the previously unmet minimum standards, a brief review of the safeguarding practice took place. The school's designated safeguarding leads are appropriately trained. The school shares concerns with safeguarding professionals.
- The school's safeguarding policy has recently changed to reflect the new ownership. However, there are issues with the new safeguarding policy, which mean that it is not fully consistent with statutory guidance. As a result, the school is not compliant with national minimum standard 11.1, which requires schools to maintain safeguarding policies consistent with statutory guidance.

Compliance with national minimum standards for residential special schools

The school does not meet the following national minimum standards for residential special schools

Standards that were met at the previous inspection, but are now judged not to be met at this inspection

- 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)
- The school has, and follows, an appropriate policy on recording and responding to complaints that is compliant with the relevant regulatory requirements. (NMS 18.1)

The school now meets the following national minimum standards for residential special schools

- Suitable sleeping accommodation is provided for children. It is well organised and managed with risk assessments undertaken and the findings acted on to reduce risk for all children. Where children are aged eight years or over, sleeping accommodation for boys is separate from sleeping accommodation for girls. (NMS 5.1)
- All children, including those with special dietary, medical or religious needs, are provided with meals which are adequate in nutrition, quantity, quality, choice and variety. (NMS 8.1)
- The school has and consistently implements a written policy on managing behaviour, including promoting good behaviour. This policy includes: measures to combat bullying, including cyberbullying, and to promote positive behaviour; school rules; disciplinary sanctions; when restraint, including reasonable force, is to be used and how this will be recorded and managed; and arrangements for searching children and their possessions. (NMS 12.1)
- There is a written agreement between the school and any person over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as children (for example, members of staff households). This specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with children, their responsibilities to supervise their visitors and notice that accommodation may cease to be provided if there is evidence that they are unsuitable to have regular contact with children. They must be required to notify an unrelated designated senior member of staff if they are charged with, or convicted of, any offence. (NMS 14.3)
- The school's written record of complaints identifies those complaints relating to residential provision and action taken by the school as a result of those complaints (regardless of whether they are upheld). (NMS 18.2)

School details

Unique reference number	121229
Social care unique reference number	SC027660
DfE registration number	926/6041
Inspection number	10030900

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	Residential special school
School status	Independent residential special school
Age range of pupils	4 to 20
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	126
Number of boarders on roll	26
Headteacher	Mr Thornton
Head of residential provision	Miss Pearce
Telephone number	01953 887217
Website	www.neweccleshall.com
Email address	headmaster@neweccleshall.com
Date of previous residential inspection	28 September 2016

Information about this school

The New Eccles Hall School is an independent residential special school for pupils aged between 4 and 20 years. Residential accommodation is offered to pupils aged eight years and above. There are 126 children and young people on roll, 26 of whom reside at the school on a weekly or full-time basis. The residential accommodation is provided in three houses in the grounds. The school is situated in rural Norfolk, between Norwich and Thetford. It caters for children and young people who have social and communication difficulties and associated behavioural difficulties. The residential provision was last inspected in September 2016.

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress that the school has made in meeting the national minimum standards that it was judged not to comply with at its previous inspection. One inspector undertook the unannounced inspection.

Inspection team

Ashley Hinson, lead inspector

Social care regulatory inspector

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