

# Sidestrand Hall School

Sidestrand Hall School, Cromer Road, Sidestrand, Cromer, Norfolk NR27 0NH

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## **Information about this residential special school**

Sidestrand Hall School is a day and residential special school on the North Norfolk coast. It is maintained by Norfolk County Council. The school caters for children and young people aged between seven and 19 with complex needs.

There are 191 pupils on roll. The total number of residential pupils is currently 26. Residential pupils can board between Monday and Friday for up to four nights.

The residential provision comprises three houses, a flat situated in the main school building and Clement Lodge, which provides accommodation for children with autism.

The residential manager has been in post since February 2021 and has a relevant qualification.

This inspection was carried out at the same time as an inspection of the school.

### **Inspection dates: 7 to 9 November 2023**

**Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account** outstanding

How well children and young people are helped and protected outstanding

The effectiveness of leaders and managers outstanding

The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

**Date of previous inspection:** 6 December 2022

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Children receive highly individualised and excellent support. The staff and managers consistently exceed the standards of good care. Children make substantial and sustained progress from their individual starting points, and they flourish. Children's quality of life and future opportunities are enhanced because of their time spent at the residential provision.

Children are extremely enthusiastic and animated when they talk about their stays in residence. Noticeboards display photos of the children taking part in a range of exciting adventures. Children's activities are thoughtfully planned, often introducing children to new opportunities which enhance their learning and development. Children's life skills and social development improve because of this exposure to new experiences.

Children's educational progress and engagement are impressive. Staff from the residential provision work closely with school staff to help children make educational progress. A recognised award and accreditation scheme has been implemented in the residential provision. This provides curriculum programmes and qualifications to help the children develop knowledge and skills for learning, work and life. Learning a variety of new skills has led to children making significant progress with their levels of independence and preparation for adult life.

Children have exceptionally positive experiences. They enjoy an extensive number of community trips, such as bowling, golf, swimming, use of public transport and library visits. Creative planning introduces the children to a wide range of local activities which help to broaden their experience of the world around them. Children take part in beach cleans and visit a local nursing home, which helps them to have a meaningful and active role in their local community.

The experienced, dedicated and skilled staff forge strong relationships with children. Interactions between the children and staff are natural and warm, filled with high regard and genuine compassion. Humour and nurture are balanced with care and guidance. The managers consistently model this approach. Consequently, children develop the sense of security and stability that they need to make progress and thrive.

Children experience well-organised inductions to the residential provision. Introductions are planned between the child, their families and residential staff at a pace that is right for the child. As a result, these introductions are consistently successful.

Feedback from parents is unreservedly positive. Parents say that their children are more independent and have flourished in their personal and emotional development.

One parent said, 'My child loves his residential experience. It is a lifeline for our whole family.'

### **How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding**

Safeguarding children remains a high priority in the school and residential provision. Comprehensive safeguarding training ensures that exceptional safeguarding practices are embedded throughout the school. Staff are aware of their safeguarding responsibilities and follow procedures for responding to concerns about the safety of a child. Concerns are reported effectively and followed up with appropriate agencies to ensure that children are protected from harm.

The designated safeguarding leads work together to ensure that there is meticulous monitoring of safeguarding concerns. Weekly meetings between the designated safeguarding lead and residential managers generate actions to ensure that children are protected. Safeguarding reports provide senior leaders and governors with comprehensive safeguarding data, including actions implemented and outcomes for the child. This adds another level of scrutiny and review to ensure that children are safe, and their well-being is fully considered.

Exemplary monitoring and routine checks ensure that the physical environment is in excellent condition.

Highly effective risk management strategies are tailored to individual risks. They refer to appropriate control measures to reduce risk and ensure that staff are well informed and consistent in how they support the children. Children's plans are devised in conjunction with the school and are regularly updated. As a result of this integrated approach, children's safety is increased.

High-quality one-to-one sessions enable children to increase their own understanding of personal safety. Extremely imaginative, effective and individualised support from staff enables children to understand how to become safer.

Children feel safe. They know who to talk to when they are worried. Children are provided with excellent opportunities to discuss their views, feelings and wishes. The independent person visits the residential setting monthly, joining the children at mealtimes and during activities. The governors and an independent visitor also carry out detailed monitoring visits which involve talking with the children. Therefore, there are a wide range of adults who the children know and can talk to.

Parents are unquestionably positive and highly complimentary. They have confidence in the staff and know that their children are safely supervised and cared for.

## **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding**

Highly dynamic, experienced and creative residential managers are supported by an equally dynamic staff team. Residential managers and the staff have extremely high aspirations for the children. The impact on the children and their families is profound. The children's lives are enriched because of the time spent with staff.

Residential managers have extraordinarily good relationships with parents and professionals, who provide unquestionably strong feedback about the quality of care, exceptional communication and positive impact that the school has on children's lives.

Experienced residential managers provide consistently strong and effective leadership. They are innovative and creative. They are respected by the staff, the children and the wider management team. Professionals spoken to describe the managers as 'brilliant', 'always welcoming' and 'excellent communicators'.

Governors are highly active and present at the school. Linked governor roles ensure that there is continuous monitoring and scrutiny of specific areas of the school and residential provision. The residential managers requested that the governors regularly visit and spend time with the children in residence. As a result, they have an excellent understanding of the residential provision and the progress the children are making.

Staff say that they are listened to and supported. Managers are reported to be visible and approachable. Staff supervision sessions are of a high quality. Staff's performance is reviewed annually to ensure continued professional development. Wide-ranging, high-quality training equips the staff extremely well to meet the children's needs. As a result, the staff feel valued.

Residential managers are strong advocates for the children. They challenge external professionals when they feel the actions being taken are not in the best interests of the children. On occasions, this has included offering bespoke educational and daytime support, as well as increasing a child's care package and putting additional evening staff in place. This support is above and beyond usual care practices that a residential provision provides.

The three points for improvement made at the last inspection have been met. These related to monitoring outcomes of child protection investigations, recording actions in response to incidents and including parent conversations in the independent person reports.

## **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:** SC042606

**Headteacher:** Shelley Taylor

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspectors**

Rachel Watkinson, Social Care Inspector (lead)

Deirdra Keating, Social Care Inspector

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