

School inspection report

23 to 25 April 2024

Centre Academy East Anglia

Church Road

Brettenham

Ipswich

IP7 7QR

The Independent Schools Inspectorate is appointed by the Department for Education to inspect association independent schools in England. Our inspections report on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards and other applicable regulatory requirements are met, collectively referred to in this report as 'the Standards'.

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Summary of inspection findings

1. The proprietor, leaders and advisory governors have a clear and shared vision for the school and ensure that it meets the Standards. Leaders actively promote the aims and ethos of the school so that these are known and understood by staff and parents.
2. Leaders and staff promote positive behaviour effectively. Pupils behave well and show high levels of respect for people in the school and wider community, including with regard to their protected characteristics such as disability, religion and sexual orientation. The mutual respect between staff and pupils supports pupils to be encouraging and supportive of each other.
3. Leaders provide a suitable curriculum which is well matched to the needs of pupils and supports pupils to access potential future pathways. Pupils' abilities, their ambitions and opinions play a key role in curriculum planning and implementation.
4. Weekly careers lessons form part of the curriculum and are effective overall. The older pupils attend external careers fairs termly which enable them to learn about a wide variety of career opportunities. However, careers guidance is not always targeted effectively and does not prepare pupils for their next steps in education or employment as well as possible.
5. All pupils have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and the school manages the individual pupils' learning needs reflected in these in a systematic, supportive and effective manner. For example, the school employs a range of therapists and provides individual and group therapy sessions that are effective in meeting pupils' specific individual needs.
6. Leaders and managers manage risk effectively. There is a clear and robust system for evaluating and mitigating potential risks for particular activities.
7. Leaders create a respectful environment where pupils can express their ideas and feelings confidently. Pupils feel that they are listened to and trust that the adults will deal with any concerns they raise.
8. Leaders maintain an effective safeguarding culture. The safeguarding policy is implemented appropriately and the school's safeguarding arrangements reflect current statutory guidance.

The extent to which the school meets the Standards

- Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance are met.
- Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing are met.
- Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society are met.
- Standards relating to safeguarding are met.

Recommended next steps

Leaders should:

- strengthen the careers provision for the older pupils to support fully their preparation for life beyond school.

Section 1: Leadership and management, and governance

9. The proprietor ensures that leaders demonstrate the relevant knowledge and skills to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. Leaders conduct an effective self-evaluation process which helps them to define a clear vision for the school's future development and agree key targets for each year. This self-evaluation is informed by leaders' knowledge of the pupils in the school and their understanding of the principles of monitoring progress for their diverse group of learners. For example, leaders have conducted a recent curriculum review and have been proactive in updating the curriculum to suit the needs of the changing profile of the pupil body.
10. The proprietor and school leaders actively promote pupils' wellbeing in line with the aims of the school. This is reflected in the delivery of a suitable curriculum that, supported by appropriate extra-curricular activities, enables the pupils to experience an effective education.
11. Leaders review and update risk assessments to support the pupils' safety during on-site and off-site activities. The risk assessments are bespoke to the pupils and take their needs and the risk they face into account. For example, there are clear procedures in place to support pupils' safety during pick-up and drop-off times. Senior leaders and the proprietor undertake a strategic and comprehensive identification, assessment and management of risk.
12. The easily accessible website provides relevant information for parents of current and prospective pupils. This information includes details of academic performance in the previous school year. Leaders communicate with parents effectively, ensuring that parents are aware of their child's progress. Leaders ensure that the education, health and care (EHC) plans of all pupils funded by a local authority (LA) are reviewed annually. Leaders provide relevant local authorities with the required information and a statement on how public money is spent to support pupils with EHC plans.
13. The proprietor and advisory governors ensure that the school fulfils its responsibilities under the Equality Act. Leaders ensure that the education provided by the school does not discriminate and makes reasonable adjustments for the pupils with special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND). A suitable accessibility plan is implemented effectively.
14. Leaders maintain effective partnerships with relevant external agencies. They keep in regular contact with local safeguarding partners and make timely referrals when required.
15. Leaders respond appropriately to any concern raised through a suitable three-stage complaints procedure. They respond to complaints promptly and within the published timeframes. The school keeps an accurate record of any complaints submitted, including of any actions taken in response to these.
16. Leaders review and evaluate pupils' attainment and progress regularly. They use their understanding of pupils' achievement to ensure that pupils' work and achievements are acknowledged and celebrated, that learning gaps are identified, and that specific targets for further progress are given.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to leadership and management, and governance

17. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 2: Quality of education, training and recreation

18. The proprietor, and senior leaders have created a suitable curriculum which considers the needs of the pupils and their future pathways. For example, the curriculum includes two distinct pathways leading to either GCSEs or unit awards and entry level certificates. Pupils understand which pathway they are on and are aware of what the success criteria are for their chosen path.
19. The curriculum is well planned and offers opportunities for all pupils to study towards qualifications and certifications in line with their achievements. This curriculum is flexible enough to allow pupils to modify their targets as their rate of progress changes. Teachers have a detailed understanding of the individual pupils' profiles and needs. This enables them to plan learning in a way which builds confidence. As a result, pupils across the school show confidence and capability in their learning.
20. Pupils enjoy their learning relative to their level of interest and ability to engage. Leaders promote a unified approach to lesson planning and delivery. Lessons begin with a short period of recall practice, which is effective in habituating the particular pupils to this repeated practice and helps previous learning to be brought to mind, prior to the introduction of new learning, as seen in a science lesson where pupils were able to recount previously learnt knowledge about how pressure is exerted on the inside of a balloon. Pupils engaged well with watching a short video on buoyancy and were excited at the prospect of building a small fool boat to test the principles later in the lesson. In a music lesson, while pupils prepared their own presentation on the 'Rock School', the teacher used questions to recap material covered in the previous lesson.
21. Staff across the school know the pupils well and use their understanding and knowledge enable pupils to be motivated and engaged. Pupils make good progress from their starting points in a range of subjects including English, mathematics and science. They are set tasks appropriate to their current attainment level and develop confidence through careful aligning of the challenge to their needs. The most recent outcomes for the pupils at GCSE level were above the national average.
22. Leaders have created time on the curriculum to provide the pupils with valuable life skills, for example those in information and communication technology (ICT), to help them adapt to life once they leave the school. In these lessons the pupils practise skills such as typing, learning to use office applications, edit audio and program code. The school also organises trips to the local supermarket to help pupils gain an understanding of how to purchase food and drink to create healthy meals.
23. Leaders support pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) through specialist teaching. This support enables these pupils to become more fluent in English in order to access the full curriculum.
24. Leaders review and evaluate pupils' attainment and progress regularly. They use their understanding of pupils' achievement to ensure that pupils' work and achievements are acknowledged and celebrated and that learning gaps are identified, and specific targets for further progress are given.
25. Leaders provide a comprehensive extra-curricular programme. Pupils engage well in a variety of activities ranging from a wargaming club to chess club and from Spanish club to ICT and music clubs. They achieve well in these areas because staff provide a positive environment and give pupils the support they need to learn effectively and to develop their mathematical skills, their self-esteem and self-confidence.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to the quality of education, training and recreation

26. All the relevant Standards are met.

Section 3: Pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

27. Leaders have established a comprehensive personal development programme, which includes relationships and sex education (RSE). Staff's nurturing approach enables pupils to feel valued as individuals. Guidance from staff enables pupils to regulate their feelings and to balance their emotions throughout the day. As a result, pupils acquire a variety of strategies that help them to develop self-knowledge and self-confidence.
28. The curriculum promotes British values, such as democracy, mutual respect and tolerance through school assemblies and, particularly in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education, discussion of related topics, such as respecting and understanding people from different background and cultures. RSE follows a well-planned structure and adheres to the requirements of current statutory guidance. Key aspects of the law relating to sex are taught, including the age of consent, as well as what consent is and is not. Through these lessons the pupils develop a mature awareness of issues related to adolescence. Pupils learn strategies for navigating new and unfamiliar social situations and keeping safe in personal relationships.
29. Leaders support staff in establishing positive behaviour strategies and implement these well in and out of lessons. Leaders oversee behaviour well with regard to individual cases and access support for behaviour and bullying incidences should these arise effectively when required. Leaders promote positive behaviour through the provision of opportunities to attend positively managed sessions such as the school breakfast club. Some pupils attend every day as this sets them up for a positive day ahead. As a result, pupils behave well in lessons and around the school site. Teachers award positive behaviour points for behaviour of high quality in lessons. During the weekly assemblies the pupils with a high number of positive behaviour points are awarded a certificate and their parents are informed. As a result, pupils are motivated to behave well.
30. Leaders take positive and effective action to prevent bullying from occurring by adhering to clear policies governing behaviour and communicating their expectations of conduct. Clear teaching enables pupils to demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the different types of bullying, including those that can occur verbally and online. Pupils learn about how the behavioural choices they make now may affect their future.
31. Pupils learn about the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle, including by getting enough sleep, eating a balanced diet and taking regular exercise. Pupils receive a broad experience of physical activities, including games and sports, which develop their skills in these as well as skills of teamwork and resilience.
32. Health and safety arrangements are effective and ensure that the premises are suitably maintained, with regular checks made on equipment and, for example, the quality of water. Leaders ensure that there is effective supervision across the site at all times of the day through careful deployment of staff. Staff are trained in fire safety and there are a high number of fire marshals. Leaders and staff take into account individual pupils' needs in relation to fire safety, such as by checking on and supporting pupils who may be sensitive to the noise of fire alarms.
33. Leaders promote high attendance effectively, including by providing families with support and individualised strategies such as staggered starting times and one-to-one enhanced settling

provision for some pupils. Leaders maintain attendance and admission registers as required. They inform the local authority whenever any pupils join or leave the school at non-standard times.

34. The school has a well-equipped medical room and robust procedures for looking after controlled and other medication. Pupils know what to do when they are injured, and staff are always keen to help. There are a large number of first aid trained staff and training is monitored and up to date. Leaders carefully consider and accommodate pupils' dietary preferences and requirements. They consult with pupils over the food choices available.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing

- 35. All the relevant Standards are met.**

Section 4: Pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

36. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to make contributions to the school community through the school council. For example, this year pupils have organised events such as the fireworks night with local visitors and the Easter egg hunt within the school day. Pupils have some opportunities to contribute to the wider community, such as through their weekly visits to a local café where the pupils will sit and talk with the elderly. Pupils have also raised funds for a children's charity by hosting fundraising games at the school's charity bonfire night. The school council enables pupils to engage in the democratic process and develop their sense of responsibility to others by acting on their behalf.
37. The curriculum enables pupils to learn about different groups in society and explores the importance of equality and fair treatment, encouraging mutual respect and respect for people's identities and worldviews, particularly in relation to characteristics such as age, religion, disability and sexual orientation. For example, in 'social skills' sessions, pupils discuss and debate issues informing their individual and collective identities. Such discussions broaden pupils' understanding and appreciation of diversity.
38. Leaders provide a programme for The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme (DofE) which includes opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and understanding of the world of work through the off-site volunteering programme. The school proactively seeks out activities which fit the pupils' interests and needs, such as training to be baristas, and facilitates them being able to access these activities.
39. Leaders effectively promote an ethos of respect, kindness and an awareness of others' feelings and needs, including through weekly assemblies which consistently refer to such themes. The curriculum successfully promotes the values of democracy, the rule of law, liberty, respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs which are fundamental to life in Britain. The school has an elected school council, which is used as an opportunity to promote and teach about democracy and the electoral process.
40. Pupils receive relevant and impartial careers guidance through a structured programme of lessons and visits to and from external agencies, such as apprenticeship skills workshops and careers fairs. This guidance is effective overall. However, individual support and targeted advice for pupils to meet their specific needs is ad hoc and does not systematically help prepare pupils for their next steps in education or employment.
41. Pupils are friendly and helpful and extremely polite as they move around the school. They understand the nuances of social niceties with respect to adult guests. Throughout the curriculum, staff take opportunities to teach pupils to accept responsibility for their own behaviour, and respect their own and diverse cultures. Staff convey the importance of contributing positively to school and home life and to the lives of those living and working in the locality and further afield.
42. Pupils receive effective economic education. For example, pupils learn about careful budgeting and the tax system. They also develop their understanding of practical economics through their weekly engagement with the local cafe as part of the 'life skills' programme.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to pupils' social and economic education and contribution to society

43. All the relevant Standards are met.

Safeguarding

44. There is a well-developed culture of safeguarding throughout the school. The safeguarding policy is implemented appropriately and reflects current statutory guidance, including with regard to child-on-child abuse and arrangements for responding to any allegations or low-level concerns about staff. Leaders make timely referrals to children’s services and the local authority designated officer when appropriate. Effective procedures and systems are in place for staff to raise concerns. All safeguarding concerns are responded to promptly in line with the safeguarding policy. Safeguarding records are secure and contain appropriate records of concerns and actions taken in response to these.
45. The proprietor maintains a suitable oversight of the school’s safeguarding policies and procedures and checks that these are implemented effectively.
46. All staff receive suitable safeguarding training, including about the ‘Prevent’ duty. They understand how to report, record and address any safeguarding concerns that might arise. Staff know the pupils well. This allows them to quickly spot any changes in pupils’ behaviour that could signal a potential concern. Staff understand the importance of effective safeguarding and they are aware of their responsibilities under the staff code of conduct.
47. Pupils are taught about online safety and how to protect themselves and report any issues or concerns to a trusted adult to enable them to be supported. The use of the school internet is appropriately filtered and monitored.
48. School leaders ensure that all required pre-appointment recruitment checks are completed and recorded accurately in the single central register of appointments. Governors maintain effective oversight of the single central record and conduct termly quality assurance checks.

The extent to which the school meets Standards relating to safeguarding

- 49. All the relevant Standards are met.**

School details

School	Centre Academy East Anglia
Department for Education number	935/6058
Address	Centre Academy East Anglia Church Road Brettenham Ipswich Suffolk IP7 7QR
Phone number	01449736404
Email address	admin@centreacademy.uk
Website	www.centreacademy.net
Proprietor	Mr Rohan Murphy
Head	Mrs Lisa Gilbert
Age range	7 to 19
Number of pupils	75
Date of previous inspection	28 March 2022

Information about the school

50. Centre Academy East Anglia is an independent co-educational day special school near Ipswich in Suffolk. Originally established as The Old Rectory School in 1981, it became Centre Academy East Anglia in 2010. The school is owned by the proprietor and supported by an advisory board of governors, which includes the head.
51. The school has identified all pupils as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). All pupils in the school have an education, health, and care (EHC) plan.
52. English is an additional language for a very small number of pupils.
53. The school states its aims are to equip students with key skills in literacy and numeracy within a broad, balanced, and suitably differentiated National Curriculum. It seeks to develop positive attitudes to and implement effective strategies for learning. The school endeavours to increase each child's confidence and self-esteem. It aims to recognise and respect each child's learning needs and style, challenging and supporting them in achieving their personal best both academically and socially and to support and advise parents in understanding their child's specific educational needs.

Inspection details

Inspection dates

23 to 25 April 2024

54. A team of three inspectors visited the school for two and a half days.

55. Inspection activities included:

- observation of lessons, some in conjunction with school leaders
- observation of registration periods and assemblies
- observation of a sample of extra-curricular activities that occurred during the inspection
- discussions with the chair and other governors
- discussions with the head, school leaders, managers and other members of staff
- discussions with pupils
- scrutiny of samples of pupils' work
- scrutiny of a range of policies, documentation and records provided by the school.

56. The inspection team considered the views of pupils, members of staff and parents who responded to ISI's pre-inspection surveys.

How are association independent schools in England inspected?

- The Department for Education is the regulator for independent schools in England.
- ISI is approved by the Secretary of State for Education to inspect independent schools in England, which are members of associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council.
- ISI inspections report to the Department for Education on the extent to which the statutory Independent School Standards, the EYFS statutory framework requirements, the National Minimum Standards for boarding schools and any other relevant standards are met.
- For more information, please visit **www.isi.net**.

Independent Schools Inspectorate

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