

2502382

Registered provider: St Joseph's Specialist Trust

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This service is a residential special school which is registered as a children's home to care for up to 29 children with learning disabilities. Accommodation is provided in seven individual houses on the school campus, although two were being refurbished at the time of this inspection. It is owned by a charity, which also has other services within the grounds.

The home's statement of purpose states that it aims to provide a total learning environment where every aspect of the children's and young people's experience helps them to develop new skills and understanding which they can use now and which will continue to be of value in the future.

The manager has been registered since November 2018.

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 July 2022

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

How well children and young people are helped and protected good

The effectiveness of leaders and managers good

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 20 April 2021

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/04/2021	Full	Good
23/01/2020	Interim	Improved effectiveness
10/09/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Staff at the home know children and their likes and dislikes well. They ensure that children are able to grow and learn in a fun environment. Children are supported to spend time in the community participating in activities and creating special memories, building their confidence and independence. One parent commented that staff support children, 'helping them walk up a hill or cycle outside. Staff don't let their [children's] needs slow them down.'

Managers carefully match children in each home based on their interests and needs. This gives children the opportunity to make new friends, participate in different activities and learn self-care skills. A child in solo accommodation has been placed in a house at the centre of the campus. This maximises opportunities for interactions with peers and minimises the potential impact of isolation.

Staff support children sensitively to develop their independence and self-care skills. There are many examples of children making significant progress during their time in the residential provision. Over a period of 12 months, one child has been supported to develop her use of communication tools, resulting in her being able to hold conversations with her family, when previously she could only give one-word responses. This is life-changing, as her confidence, social skills and ability to manage feelings have all improved as a result.

Staff spoke fondly of children and were considerate when working with them. Staff gave several examples of children's progress since coming to live in the house, for example, the ability to interact with others, go out into the community and do simple chores. One child was now helping with chores at his family home too.

Managers and staff seek children's views and incorporate these into their care planning. This means the child's voice is evident in their documentation and understood by all working with them.

Senior managers support careful planning for children's futures. This includes creative use of the organisation's own adult service and resources to create bespoke care arrangements. This enables children to have the best possible start in the new provision.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: good

Children feel able to make a complaint and supportive staff ensure that any concerns about practice are quickly and transparently escalated. A diligent safeguarding team ensures that if concerns involve young people over the age of 18 in the residential provision, adult services are involved. This ensures that risks to children and vulnerable adults are reported and agencies are aware.

Staff sensitively support children who become unsettled. They may use physical intervention to ensure everyone is safe but this is not habitual or excessive. Only trained staff use holds and they consider the child's dignity at all times. Children's views are sought and support is offered after any physical intervention, to leave the child feeling reassured.

Dedicated staff work tirelessly to avoid the use of sanctions. Creative use of independence time, working on issues such as 'stranger danger' or road safety, helps children to become safer.

Medication errors are mostly of a low level, such as the administration of supplements or in record-keeping. These errors have reduced but have not been eradicated. Managers have sought different strategies to address the issue and continue to look for ways to improve practice. This demonstrates a determination to avoid any potential risk associated with children's treatment for their conditions.

The home's safer recruitment processes are thorough and records are detailed. This means that children are cared for by suitably recruited staff.

Inspectors found records of an incident in which a child went missing. These demonstrated that staff took all appropriate action to locate and support the child, as well as notify the appropriate people and agencies. However, it was not then treated as an episode of going missing from home in a way that would have triggered closer monitoring. Managers and staff therefore missed the opportunity to learn from the event.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

Leaders and managers have an ambitious vision for the residential provision. Work on a plan to completely refurbish all the existing houses has started and is in the process of significantly raising the standard of accommodation. This vision extends to the children and the desire to maximise their opportunities while living at the home. An example is the setting of targets for each child that relate to education, health and care plan goals and gaining independence. These are effective in promoting increasing development for children.

There is a culture of learning from practice, particularly following incidents with children. This helps to identify more effective ways of managing undesirable behaviour, which are then disseminated through updated plans for particular children and across the provision. This, together with research being undertaken by managers and leaders, has contributed to an overall reduction in physical interventions.

Senior leaders recognise that the management team is not culturally diverse and have taken steps to identify the impact of this on minority groups in the workforce. As a result, they are more confident in how they communicate about potentially sensitive issues.

Staff feel well supported and equipped to support the children in their care. Well-planned inductions and training opportunities give them the skills and knowledge to provide care in this setting. This shows in their practice, when children seek out staff and appear happy in their company.

Managers have systems in place to oversee many areas of the home. For example, the maintenance, recruitment checks and training records are all monitored and gaps rectified quickly and effectively. However, inspectors found information or analysis was lacking in a number of areas. This demonstrates a lack of thorough processes to ensure leaders have effective oversight of the whole service. As a result, leaders cannot be certain that they have all the information required to monitor all aspects of the service effectively. The registered manager has also overlooked sending the statement of purpose updates and a response to requirements made at the last inspection to the regulator.

What does the children’s home need to do to improve? Statutory requirements

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the ‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>The leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children’s home that—</p> <p>helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and</p> <p>promotes their welfare.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(h))</p>	<p>31 August 2022</p>

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 Care Standards Act 2000 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 Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the ‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2502382

Provision sub-type: Residential special school

Registered provider: St Joseph's Specialist Trust

Registered provider address: Amlets Lane, Cranleigh, Surrey GU6 7DH

Responsible individual: Anne Sutton

Registered manager: Alan Day

Inspectors

Chris Peel, Social Care Inspector

Matt Nicholls, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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