

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 that is registered as a children's home to care for up to 10 children with learning disabilities. It is owned by a charity. Accommodation is provided across four residential houses.

At the time of the inspection, five children and four young people were living in the home. The inspectors only inspected the social care provision at this school.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since October 2018. They were not present for this inspection.

Inspection dates: 25 to 27 November 2025

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| Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account | good |
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| How well children and young people are helped and protected | requires improvement to be good |
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| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | requires improvement to be good |
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 4 February 2025

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

| Inspection date | Inspection type | Inspection judgement |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| 04/02/2025 | Full | Good |
| 06/06/2023 | Full | Good |
| 05/07/2022 | Full | Good |
| 20/04/2021 | Full | Good |

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children and young people make progress from their starting points. Since the last inspection, progress for some children and young people has been consistent and significant. This includes reductions in behavioural incidents, improved independence and enjoying more activities in the community.

Children and young people benefit from the consistent and clear routines and stability at the home. Staff know the children and young people well and pick up on their communication cues, for example a tap of a hand to indicate 'more', or a specific noise which indicates if they are happy or sad, or if there is a particular need, such as support with self-care.

Overall, children and young people's health needs are met well, supported by access to universal healthcare, including dentistry and eye care. In addition, staff identify and take immediate action when a child or young person is unwell or in pain. As a result, children receive immediate responses when they are sick or require more specialist healthcare. Staff support children when attending health appointments or while in hospital.

Children and young people are supported to take part in a wide range of activities. The outdoor swimming pool was well used in the summer months, and much enjoyment is had with the tricycles and the on-site adventure playground and grounds. Outings include trips to a local water park, shopping and exploring the local community.

All children and young people access some form of education. The children attend the on-site school. There is flexibility in children's routines to ensure that their transition from the home to the school is as smooth as possible. This helps to ensure that the children arrive at school ready and willing to learn. The young people also have access to education. For example, one young person attends college, while another receives tutoring.

The children and young people's relationships with their families and those who are important to them are supported well by staff. Staff go to great lengths to help the children and young people to prepare for family time. For example, staff support travel and help to plan activities, and, for one young person, staff stayed with them over a weekend while they visited family. This helps the children and young people to maintain important relationships.

Children and young people are supported well to develop their independence skills, including tasks such as laundry, cooking, cleaning and having a level of safe-care skills. Children take pride in their achievements, and these are celebrated by staff.

Children and young people's views are captured in various ways, often supported by speech and language therapists. The therapists guide staff on specific areas, such as

when gaining children's feedback following incidents, or preparing them for upcoming events.

In the main, the interactions between children, young people and staff are nurturing and kind. They demonstrate that staff genuinely care for them and that their views are important. However, there are times when staff talk about children and young people in front of them, as if they are not there. This is contrary to the ethos of the home.

There are restrictions in place for some children and young people. For instance, their bedroom and en-suite doors have sensors/alarms, and wardrobes, cupboards and drawers are locked. While these arrangements are well intended and may be necessary in some cases, the restrictions have remained in place for some time. The need for these restrictions is unclear, and they have not been risk assessed or reviewed regularly. Therefore, it is not clear if the current level of restrictions is necessary.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: requires improvement to be good

The arrangements for safeguarding are inconsistent. This is because, while most incidents are dealt with robustly, some fall short of being addressed in line with statutory guidance.

Staff confidently raise concerns with leaders and managers when they are worried about children and young people's welfare. However, on two occasions, there was a lack of professional curiosity when young people presented with unexplained injuries. Although the concerns were raised with the internal safeguarding team, the matters were investigated and concluded with insufficient medical advice or other external guidance. This is because the cause of injuries was assumed to be related to a known health issue. There was a lack of management oversight in both cases.

Generally, leaders and managers take appropriate action when concerns or allegations are raised regarding staff. This includes staff raising concerns with managers, should they see practice that falls short of what is expected. Once managers are alerted, they appropriately liaise with the local authority designated officer and inform other relevant professionals and family members. However, on one occasion, there was a significant delay in seeking appropriate advice.

Leaders and managers do not have effective systems to monitor and oversee safeguarding arrangements. Safeguarding incidents are considered individually and not within a wider context. This results in missed opportunities to identify and respond to any patterns that may be emerging and has led to some of the inconsistencies identified. However, this issue has recently been recognised by leaders and plans are being developed to improve oversight.

Children and young people's risk management and behaviour support plans are not of good quality. This is because there is a lack of clear guidance for staff when certain risks

or known behaviours are presented. Although this may not be a barrier for more experienced staff, the plans do not inform new or agency staff sufficiently. This weakness risks inconsistent practice with children and young people.

Positive behaviour is promoted well. Incident records are clear, they contain relevant information and are exceptionally detailed. There are also good examples of how children and young people's views are sought following an incident. Management oversight is good in terms of incidents and physical interventions. As a result, there has been a reduction in physical interventions since the last inspection.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: requires improvement to be good

Since the last inspection, there have been changes in the leadership and management arrangements. The registered manager is currently not working in the home and the responsible individual is undertaking the management responsibilities.

The weaknesses identified in previous inspections relating to reviewing and monitoring systems remain underdeveloped. This is because there has been insufficient leadership and management oversight of staff supervision, medication administration, safeguarding arrangements, the quality and consistency of staff practice, risk management and behaviour support plans. However, leaders have recently identified the shortfalls in these areas for themselves. As a result, there are now plans in place to fully address the weaknesses.

Leaders and managers have not promptly addressed maintenance issues that are evident in some children's bedrooms, although the bedrooms are mostly comfortable and nicely personalised.

Leaders and managers have insufficient oversight of medication administration. Generally, staff have a good understanding of children's medications, their purpose and the method of administration. However, a small number of medication errors have occurred since the last inspection. When individual errors are identified, immediate medical advice is sought and swift action is taken to begin investigations. However, processes to identify errors more proactively are underdeveloped. It is also not clear whether any learning is collated, and whether patterns and themes are tracked and used to inform staff practice.

There is good oversight of staff training. Leaders have taken action to address the shortfalls identified at the last inspection, specifically in relation to first-aid training and ensuring that all staff have the same level of training, including night staff.

Staff appraisals and supervision sessions are of variable quality. Most do not evidence sufficient reflection or exploration of the key issues for children and young people. Consequently, meaningful actions are rarely identified. Leaders have plans in place to address this.

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, The 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>This requirement is restated.</p> | 30 January 2026 |
| <p>The protection of children standard is that children are protected from harm and enabled to keep themselves safe.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure—</p> <p>that staff—</p> <p>assess whether each child is at risk of harm, taking into account information in the child's relevant plans, and, if necessary, make arrangements to reduce the risk of any harm to the child;</p> <p>take effective action whenever there is a serious concern about a child's welfare. (Regulation 12 (2)(a)(i)(iv))</p> | 30 January 2026 |

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| <p>The quality and purpose of care standard is that children receive care from staff who—</p> <p>understand the children’s home’s overall aims and the outcomes it seeks to achieve for children;</p> <p>use this understanding to deliver care that meets children’s needs and supports them to fulfil their potential.</p> <p>In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to—</p> <p>ensure that staff—</p> <p>treat each child with dignity and respect. (Regulation 6 (1)(a)(b) (2)(b)(iii))</p> <p>In particular, leaders and managers must ensure that staff do not talk to and about children as if they are not present.</p> | 30 January 2026 |
| <p>The registered person must ensure that all employees—</p> <p>receive practice-related supervision by a person with appropriate experience. (Regulation 33 (4)(b))</p> <p>This requirement is restated.</p> | 30 January 2026 |

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the children’s home provides a nurturing and supportive environment that meets the needs of children and young people. In particular, leaders and managers should ensure that all maintenance issues are addressed promptly. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.9)
- The registered person should ensure that children can access all areas of their home unless there are specific reasons why they should not. Limits on privacy and access may only be put in place to safeguard each child or young person. All decisions should be informed by a rigorous assessment for the individual child or young person. They should be properly recorded and be kept under regular review. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 15, paragraph 3.10)
- The registered person should ensure that there are suitable arrangements to manage, administer and dispose of any medication. (‘Guide to the Children’s Homes Regulations, including the quality standards’, page 35, paragraph 7.15)

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

Kelly Marchmont, Regulatory Inspection Manager
Matt Hedges, Senior His Majesty's Inspector

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