

St Rose's School

St Rose's Special School, Stratford Lawn, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 4AP

Assurance visit

Information about this residential special school

St Rose's School is a co-educational, non-maintained, Roman Catholic day and residential school. It provides a service for children and young people who have physical disabilities and/or associated sensory, communication and learning difficulties. Some children have complex healthcare issues, and 24-hour nursing support is available. Children are aged between two and 19 years.

The residential accommodation is in a building which is attached to the main school. At the time of this inspection, there were 25 children on roll in the school and the residential provision was supporting five children. The school offers flexible boarding arrangements from one to four nights each week during term time. Alternate weekend care and a programme of activities in the school holidays are also provided

Visit dates: 22 to 23 October 2020

Previous inspection date: 10 June 2019

Previous inspection judgement: Requires improvement to be good

Information about this visit

Due to COVID-19 (coronavirus), Ofsted suspended all routine inspections in March 2020. As part of a phased return to routine inspection, we are undertaking assurance visits to children's social care services that are inspected under the social care common inspection framework (SCCIF).

At these visits, inspectors evaluate the extent to which:

- children are well cared for
- children are safe
- leaders and managers are exercising strong leadership.

This visit was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000, following the published guidance for assurance visits.

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills is leading Ofsted's work into how England's social care system has delivered child-centred practice and care within the context of the restrictions placed on society during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Findings from the visit

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance visit.

The care of children

Children are cared for by staff who know them well. The team is experienced and has the skills, experience and qualifications required to meet the children's needs. Children's residential experiences have improved as a result. Professionals and parents report positively about the progress children have achieved.

Staff reported that during the COVID-19 pandemic the restrictions helped to strengthen the relationships between the children and staff. The staff said, 'The children adjusted exceptionally well to the changes introduced. Lockdown provided us with an opportunity to spend quality time with the children, it was enjoyable. The children thrived.'

The inspector observed warm, respectful and thoughtful interactions between staff and the children. Mealtimes are sociable events where children are supported with dignity to develop independence skills as appropriate. Staff were seen to help children and follow eating and drinking plans sensitively and appropriately. A parent who contributed to this assurance visit said, 'I trust the staff who care for my son, even more than I trust myself on occasions.'

Children benefit from the improvements made to the residential environment. The relocation of the dining facilities and pictures displayed in the communal rooms are child friendly and stimulate their sensory needs.

The safety of children

Children are kept safe at this school. A parent and professionals confirm that they too are assured that children are safe. Leaders and managers have prioritised children's safety and well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have implemented robust hygiene processes and followed the government guidelines. The care staff said, 'During and throughout the pandemic, the leadership team has been extremely supportive. They have kept us, and parents, updated on any changes that have the potential to affect the children in our care.'

Leaders and managers have taken robust and effective action to reduce restrictive practices. Listening devices are no longer used, and the use of high-sided cot beds is diminishing. One child now benefits from sleeping in a low-rise bed. He is getting

in and out of bed independently. Leaders and managers are regularly reviewing the continued need and use of second child's cot bed.

Staff promote children's independence well because support plans are regularly reviewed and comprehensively detail all aspects of the child's care, health and social needs. Risk assessments provide staff with information on how to manage and mitigate risks.

Leaders and managers have reviewed the effectiveness of the school's recording and reporting systems. In response, they have purchased an electronic recording system. Leaders and managers are confident that when the system has been introduced, the quality and content of behavioural reports completed by staff will improve.

Leaders and managers

Monitoring visits by governors take place regularly. Reports about the conduct of the school are completed and provided to the headteacher in a timely manner. Despite this progress, the information detailed in these reports is sparse and does not include all the information detailed in the national minimum standards. In addition, the independent visitor has not analysed or evaluated the records that have been reviewed.

Leaders and managers have introduced new consultation systems; these are in the early stages of implementation and their effectiveness has not yet been tested. Leaders and managers are considering developing these consultation systems further to include how children are safeguarded.

All staff are compliant with basic mandatory training and specialist training to meet the complex needs of the children they care for. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions, the staff have not been able to complete all refresher training. Leaders and managers are aware of this and plan to book refresher training courses when it is safe to do so.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff are provided with regular formal supervisions. Despite this, leaders and managers are not using these meetings effectively. Opportunities for staff to reflect on their practice or review children's progress are missed. In addition, the quality and content of supervision records are variable.

Leaders and managers are learning from inspection findings. They have demonstrated determination and are motivated to improve the quality of care and support children receive. The school's strategic development plan details what actions leaders and managers propose to take to meet the national minimum standards which were not met at the last inspection. Good progress has been made in meeting the targets set.

A parent and the care staff who contributed to this assurance visit spoke highly of the leadership and management team. A parent said, 'The Principal is the heart of the school. She is friendly, approachable and knowledgeable. She has an incredible team of staff around her.'

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Compliance with the national minimum standards for residential special schools

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

- 12.6 A written record is kept of major sanctions and the use of any reasonable force. Records include the information in Appendix 2 (use of reasonable force). The record is made within 24 hours and is legible. Children are encouraged to have their views recorded in the records. The school regularly reviews any instances of the use of reasonable force and examines trends or issues to enable staff to reflect and learn in a way that will inform future practice.
- 20.1 The governing body, trustees, partnership or organisation responsible for carrying on the school arrange for one of their number, or a representative who is independent of the management of the school, to visit the school six times, spread evenly, over the course of a school year and complete a written report on the conduct of the school. Where the school has an individual proprietor, that person may carry out such visits personally if they are not also the headteacher (or school equivalent).

Recommendations

- Ensure care staff are provided with an opportunity to reflect on their practice within formal supervision meetings.
- Continue to develop consultation systems with professionals.

Residential special school details

Unique reference number: SC034383

Principal: Sheila Talwar

Inspectors

Sharron Escott, Social Care Inspector
Wendy Anderson, Social Care Inspector

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