

Inspection of Glebe House

Church Road, Shudy Camps, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB21 4QH

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 March 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Does the school meet the independent school standards?

Yes

What is it like to attend this school?

Glebe House is a special place. It is more than a school. It is part of a therapeutic community that works together to improve the life chances of the young men who live there. Pupils come to Glebe House with difficult and challenging histories. The school provides them with a safe place to learn, separate from the very challenging aspects of their lives that they work on with their therapists.

Leaders want the best for pupils. While being ever mindful of pupils' emotional needs, they encourage them to reach as far as they can academically. All pupils leave Glebe House with qualifications that they can use in their adult lives.

The strong relationships that pupils have with staff help them to feel safe. Any issues between pupils are dealt with quickly and effectively. 'Community meetings' are held three times each day. This enables pupils to share and work through any difficulties that arise.

Pupils' previous experiences mean that education is often something that they do not feel positive about. This gradually changes as pupils spend more time at the school. Although there are still many 'ups and downs', pupils enjoy their time at 'the ed shed', as the school is known.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have ensured that the school has an appropriate curriculum in place. Each pupil has a bespoke timetable, designed to meet his individual needs and abilities. This helps pupils to achieve well during their time at Glebe House.

Subjects are planned and sequenced well. Leaders have thought carefully about what is most important for pupils to learn, and the best order for them to learn it. Teachers use qualification frameworks as starting points in their planning. They adapt and build on these to ensure there is broad coverage of each subject.

Teachers are skilled at adapting their teaching to meet pupils' needs. Pupils are usually taught individually, although sometimes in pairs or small groups. Teachers assess pupils regularly to ensure that they plan work that is well matched to pupils' needs. They give pupils frequent opportunities to practise what they are taught so that they remember things in the longer term. Pupils' misconceptions are noticed and tackled quickly.

Pupils' ability to concentrate and engage well with their learning varies enormously from lesson to lesson. This is a result of their social, emotional and mental health needs. Staff are extremely adept at adapting their approach according to how pupils are feeling when they arrive at each lesson. This makes a notable difference in terms of how pupils view school and how well they achieve.

The curriculum is taught by staff who are specialists in their subjects. An appropriate emphasis is placed on learning English and mathematics, including ensuring that pupils can read. Pupils leave the school with meaningful qualifications in these subjects, usually functional skills and, occasionally, GCSEs. They also gain suitable qualifications in other subjects, such as art and motor vehicle studies.

Preparing pupils for adulthood is a strength of the school. Pupils take part in week-long episodes of on-site work experience twice each year. They learn about key aspects of work, including health and safety. Some pupils also have off-site work experience, where this is possible and in their best interests. Pupils also follow a structured programme covering a wide range of life skills, including budgeting, cookery and home care.

Leaders have put strong transition arrangements in place. These start six months before pupils are due to leave the school and continue for a further 18 months after they leave. The transitions manager makes regular visits to see ex-pupils in their new homes. He continues to liaise with professionals involved in pupils' ongoing care and support. This supports pupils well as they move from their home at Glebe House to their new adult homes in the community.

A further strength is the close interweaving of the work done by the school's staff, the therapists and the residential staff. This results in a very strong focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Expectations of pupils are high. Respect and appreciation of people's differences are constantly modelled by the staff at Glebe House. This has a notable impact on helping pupils learn how to behave appropriately in order to be effective members of a community.

The school's curriculum meets the requirements of the independent school standards in terms of coverage. However, the range of subjects is limited. For example, the school does not currently teach subjects such as history and geography. In addition, the depth to which some subjects, such as cookery and motor vehicle studies, can be taught is limited by the resources available. For example, motor vehicle studies is currently delivered successfully at level one. However, the school would require a vehicle inspection pit, and other equipment, to meet the requirements of the level two qualification. The proprietor has plans in place to improve the facilities for teaching these subjects.

The improvements in governance that were noted at the progress monitoring inspection a year ago have been sustained. Trustees now focus well on the independent school standards. They have ensured that the standards are met consistently, the school's safeguarding policy is available on its website and that the school complies with schedule 10 of the Equality Act 2010. The education subcommittee is developing its effectiveness. However, there is more work to do to develop trustees' ability to challenge leaders and hold them fully to account for the quality of the trust's educational provision.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding has a very high focus at Glebe House. The school's designated safeguarding leads, and its safeguarding trustee, are all qualified social workers with extensive experience in child protection services. Detailed risk assessments are carried out for every pupil and revisited regularly. This ensures that their individual safety needs are met, both to protect themselves and other people. Leaders have ensured that appropriate arrangements are in place with police and social care services so that the right actions are taken quickly when necessary. Staff receive regular safeguarding training. They report their concerns in a timely fashion and appropriate action is taken in response to them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and proprietor)

- The school's curriculum is limited in terms of the subjects that it includes and the depth that some subjects are taught. This means that pupils do not have the opportunity to study subjects that they may be interested in, such as history and geography. In some vocational subjects, such as motor vehicle studies, the level of qualifications pupils are able to gain is limited by the resources that are available. Leaders and the proprietor should consider broadening the range of subjects that are available to pupils. They should also further develop the facilities available for teaching vocational studies so that pupils can study in more depth and gain higher-level qualifications, where appropriate.
- Governance arrangements remain limited in their effectiveness. This means that the proprietor body is overly reliant on leaders to assure it of the school's effectiveness. Trustees should take action to strengthen governance arrangements so that they are better able to challenge and hold leaders to account.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the provider and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

School details

Unique reference number	142625
DfE registration number	873/6053
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10193494
Type of school	Other independent special school
School category	Independent school
Age range of pupils	15 to 19
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	9
Proprietor	The Friends Therapeutic Community Trust
Chair	Francis Presidge
Headteacher	Janet Corr
Annual fees (day pupils)	Pre-Prep, Divs I and II £2,830 per term Prep School Divs III to VIII £4,520 per term
Telephone number	01799 584359
Website	www.ftctrust.org.uk
Email address	education@glebehouse.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 to 15 November 2019

Information about this school

- Glebe House is owned by The Friends Therapeutic Community Trust, a Quaker-led charity. The school does not have a religious ethos or character.
- The proprietor also operates a registered children's home (SC0-25733) on the same site. All of the school's pupils live in the on-site children's home, and all of the children's home residents are pupils at the school.
- All of Glebe House's trustees are also considered to be school governors. A group of three trustees make up the education subcommittee, which oversees the work of the school.
- The previous headteacher left the school in July 2021. The school is currently led by an acting headteacher.
- The school originally registered with the Department for Education (DfE) as an independent school. Following the November 2019 inspection, the school changed its registration status. It is now registered as an independent special school.
- All pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities linked to their behavioural, social, emotional and mental health needs. These are often a result of personal trauma. Some pupils also have other additional learning needs. Eight of the nine pupils currently on roll have an education, health and care plan.
- Pupils join the school at different times of the year. Most arrive with significant gaps in their learning because of extensive periods away from school.
- Pupils follow a two-year programme of education, therapeutic care and support designed to prepare them for adulthood and independent living. The school continues to provide support for pupils for 18 months after they leave as part of its transition arrangements.
- The school originally registered to take pupils from 15 to 18 years. Following a material change inspection in February 2021, the Department for Education (DfE) agreed to the school's request to raise the upper limit of its age range. The school is currently registered to take boys between the ages of 15 and 19 years.
- At its first inspection in 2017, the school was judged to require improvement. The proprietor had not ensured that all the independent school standards were met. In 2018, the school was issued with a notice to improve by the DfE. Two successive action plans submitted to Ofsted were judged to be unacceptable. A third action plan submitted in July 2018 was accepted.
- An Ofsted monitoring inspection in November 2018 found that the school did not meet all the independent school standards that were checked.
- At its second full standard inspection in November 2019, the school was again judged to require improvement. The proprietor had not ensured that all the independent school standards were met.
- Leaders produced an action plan following a notice to improve from the DfE. The plan was judged to be unacceptable by Ofsted in March 2020.
- A monitoring inspection was carried out in February 2021. Inspectors judged all the independent school standards that were checked to be met.

- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The school meets the independent school standards. These are the requirements set out in the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher, the clinical director, subject leaders, the acting chief executive officer of the trust and two trustees.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: English, mathematics, motor vehicle studies and art. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also listened to pupils reading; scrutinised a range of school documents; attended a 'community meeting'; and joined the 'therapeutic community' for lunch.
- In order to check the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors checked the single central record of pre-appointment checks, looked at records of child protection concerns and spoke with staff, pupils, the designated safeguarding lead and the safeguarding governor.
- Inspectors took into account the seven responses to Ofsted's staff survey that were received. There were no responses to the pupil survey or Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Wendy Varney, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kay Leach

Ofsted Inspector

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