

# St Rose's School

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

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

## 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 who have physical disabilities and/or associated sensory, communication and learning disabilities. 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 attached to the main school. The new purpose-built accommodation has capacity for four students to stay. At the time of this inspection, there were 33 children on roll in the school and the residential provision was supporting three students, all aged 18 years. The school offers flexible boarding arrangements from one to four nights with alternate weekend care available during term time.

The head of care has been in post since November 2021. He has a level 5 management qualification. The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

### Inspection dates: 28 February to 2 March 2023

**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 residential special school provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

**Date of previous inspection:** 23 November 2021

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** good

## Inspection judgements

### Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Residential students benefit from warm, nurturing care that is provided with dignity and respect. The staff and managers know the students very well and have formed trusted and secure relationships. Student welfare is at the forefront of any decision-making in care planning. Staff strive to ensure that students have a positive experience when staying overnight at this school.

Since the previous inspection, the residential provision has transferred into purpose-built, two-storey accommodation. The large, spacious building significantly enhances the residential experience with modern equipment and wide doorways. The new lift has space to easily accommodate wheelchairs and the kitchen is fitted with a height-adjustable sink and work surfaces. Previously, staff and students had to adapt to the use of an old building on the first floor of the school without a kitchen. Now they have their own kitchen and easy access out into the grounds, where students like to go for walks and use the sunken trampoline.

The multidisciplinary team of school staff, residential staff, therapists and nursing staff contribute significantly to the progress that students make. These professionals work closely and effectively together to ensure that the students receive a fully integrated package of support to meet their health, care and educational needs. Therapists support students in the residential area and provide advice and guidance to parents and carers. This enables all the adults involved in the students' care to adopt the same strategies and systems as used when at school.

Complex needs and health concerns are not seen as barriers to students having opportunities to express their wishes and feelings. Students are supported with their communication from the therapy team and use of assisted technology. One student has progressed exceptionally well with his level of communication through using a tablet installed with a bespoke program. This has also led to an increase in his verbal skills. Another student has struggled to engage with the many communications systems introduced to him over several years. With persistence from the therapists, he has started to relate to small video clips of himself doing different things and is able to select a video to communicate his needs and wishes. This is a clear example of the can-do attitude that permeates through the school.

Students are welcomed sensitively and at their pace when they first come to the residential provision. There are celebrations and positive endings for those that leave to go on to colleges and adult services. During their stay, records are made of how their health and care needs are met and such information is shared with parents. Anecdotally, the managers and staff love to proudly share examples of the students' progress. Achievements are celebrated, no matter how small. However, records fail to fully capture students' progress and experiences while staying at school.

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

There is a strong safeguarding culture across the school. Caring and dedicated staff are committed to the protection of students. Lead staff with designated safeguarding responsibilities are knowledgeable and suitably trained. They attend external conferences and receive newsletters from child protection agencies. They ensure that all staff, including the governing body, are trained to understand their role and responsibilities in safeguarding the children and young adults across the school.

Governors and the lead staff for safeguarding have considered the findings from a national review into safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings. This level of attention to reviews and inquiries ensures that leaders and managers are abreast of current issues in social care and sufficiently informed to take protective action.

Parents report that their children are safe when staying at this school. They have developed trust in the staff. Parents can be reassured that there have been no incidents of students going missing, no allegations made against staff, no use of restraint and no complaints received. All accidents and incidents are recorded clearly on an information management system. This effective system enables leaders and managers to be alerted when entries are made, therefore they are prompted to review and analyse the reports.

Risk management and behaviour support constitute another area of collaboration across the school. Therapists take the lead to produce behaviour support plans and risk assessments. Generally, these are good-quality documents; however, the risks identified by the therapists are not always fully aligned with the risks detailed in the residential support plans. Students are supported to understand their sexual health when in lessons, and when staying in the residential provision. However, the care and support plans fail to capture details about sexual health, hindering the staff in being able to respond in a consistent manner.

The guidance for recruiting staff is not always followed. One omission was noted from the review of five staff personnel records. Leaders and managers have failed to secure a reference from the last time an applicant worked with children. Although the previous employment with children was eight years ago, it remains a statutory requirement and therefore the national minimum standard is not met.

### **The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good**

The residential provision is led effectively by suitably trained and experienced managers. The head of care has been in post for over a year now and is supported well by the senior leadership team to fulfil his dual role of managing the residential provision for the school, and a separate care facility for the college on the same site.

Despite the nationwide difficulties in recruiting care staff, this has not affected the residential provision of the school. An established core team provides consistency

and familiarity to the students. The number of students has decreased since the last inspection. Leaders and managers wish to recruit additional care staff to be able to offer more students the opportunity to sleep over at school.

Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have invested wisely to commission an independent organisation to visit the residential provision six times a year. This is a significant improvement to invite an independent person to conduct some enquiries to provide an evaluation of the quality of the residential care. The independent reports provide a helpful monitoring tool for the governors to use when carrying out their responsibility for the oversight of the residential provision. Recommendations from the independent person have resulted in improvements to the residential provision.

Staff feel supported by the leadership team. Established members of staff who have worked at the school for many years, some for up to three decades, continue to be motivated and willing to embrace change and new initiatives.

All parents report very positively about the residential provision. They describe the quality of care provided as 'absolutely outstanding', 'excellent', 'superb', 'amazing staff' and 'it couldn't be any better'. A parent referred to their child's progress and said, 'he still surprises me'. One parent reported a lack of consultation in deciding the personal targets that their child is supported with. Leaders and managers accept this as an area for improvement.

## **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 standard for residential special schools:

- School leaders should ensure that they operate safer recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (Residential special schools: national minimum standards, page 29, paragraph 24.1)

### **Points for improvement**

- School leaders should ensure that placement plans include all known risks in one document and that plans include details on how students are supported with their sexual health.
- School leaders should ensure that records routinely evidence the progress made by students.
- School leaders should ensure that parents are consulted regarding the targets set for their children.

### **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 Children Act 1989 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 national minimum standards.

## **Residential special school details**

**Social care unique reference number:** SC034383

**Headteacher in charge:** Sheila Talwar

**Type of school:** Residential special school

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## **Inspector**

Clare Davies, Social Care Inspector (lead)

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