

St John's School Community Holiday

The Saint John's School Foundation

Epsom Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8SP

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential holiday scheme for disabled children

This residential scheme provides a residential activity holiday for children who may have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities and/or sensory needs.

The manager has been registered with Ofsted since 12 August 2019.

Inspection dates: 14 to 21 August 2023

Overall experience and progress of children and young people, taking into account **outstanding**

How well children and young people are helped and protected **outstanding**

The effectiveness of leaders and managers **outstanding**

The residential holiday scheme for disabled children provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the residential holiday scheme contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of previous inspection: 24 August 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgement

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The children enjoy a fun-packed holiday with enthusiastic and attentive helpers who interact positively with them. The senior volunteers are creative in the range of activities that are offered. These include visits to farms and activity centres, as well as inclusive cycling, dance fitness and magic shows. The volunteers respond effectively to last-minute changes and source alternative venues. They visit the activity centres to complete risk assessments and ensure that they are suitable and safe. Volunteers and children integrate with the public while also having a safe, private 'base camp' space where the children can go for quiet time.

The senior volunteers meticulously plan the event each year and continually learn from previous years to develop and improve the experiences for the children. They collate feedback from a range of sources, including parents and children. In addition, the volunteers help the children to complete daily diaries each evening to capture their memories and give them the opportunity to share any worries they may have.

The volunteers are trained to communicate using the children's preferred method of communication. One of the strengths of this holiday scheme is the support offered to children who have previously struggled to manage their anxiety and regulate their behaviour. The senior volunteers work together before the start of the scheme to identify how they can safely manage children's needs. In consultation with the children's parents, volunteers visit the children's schools to share relevant information to inform their care and behaviour management plans. This has been successful in ensuring the safety of the children, their peers and the volunteers.

The volunteers were observed to genuinely enjoy being with the children, and many of them have worked on the scheme previously. Volunteers take time out of their work or education schedules to support the successful running of the scheme. All volunteers spoken to, without exception, talked about what they gained personally from working with the children.

The children develop their social skills and friendships as a result of attending the scheme each year. They enjoy spending time with their peers as well as the volunteers.

The structure of the holiday scheme means that the volunteers are able to work with all the children. The children are familiar with the whole team. The handover between volunteers is sensitively managed, with essential information being shared. The volunteers ensure that there is a smooth transition. This is made positive for the children using reassurance, visual aids and humour.

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

The safety and welfare of the children are the main focus. The senior volunteer team reflects on any learning from previous years and develops training in response to this learning. A safeguarding quiz identifies any gaps in volunteers' knowledge, which are immediately addressed.

Safeguarding records include any actions identified, and children's care plans are updated. Safeguarding records also include a detailed chronology as evidence that safeguarding processes have been adhered to. One child protection matter was managed well by the safeguarding team and reported to external professionals. However, the concern was not reported to Ofsted. Safeguarding forms have been updated to include a reminder of when and who to notify. There was no impact on the child due to this omission.

Senior volunteers facilitate daily discussions with other volunteers where they reflect on the day and any changes that need to be made to children's care plans. These are seen as live documents, which are reviewed throughout the holiday.

Most senior volunteers and group leaders are trained in physical intervention. In addition, the behaviour management protocols are reviewed, and volunteers are trained in the best way to support the children. The behaviour management plans give clear guidance regarding de-escalation techniques. This has resulted in a reduction in incidents. The registered manager evaluates and analyses incident forms for any trends or triggers, which inform any modifications to the plans.

The safety of the children is paramount. The number of first-aid-trained volunteers has increased to provide a quick response to any accidents. Personal emergency evacuation plans inform staff of the support that children need in the event of a fire. A fire drill on the first day is evaluated, and any learning is used to update these plans.

The night-time arrangements are carefully considered to ensure a safe and positive match with children and volunteers. Senior volunteers provide an on-call system to provide additional support.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The registered manager is an inspirational leader and a positive role model. He ensures that the aims and objectives of the scheme are met to a consistently high standard. All the volunteers spoken to were enthusiastic about the scheme and talked about the children with affection and pride. The positivity of the senior management team, many of whom have worked on the scheme since it started ten years ago, disseminates to the volunteers.

The training programme is comprehensive and responsive to identified areas of learning and development. The focus is on the children's safety, well-being,

communication and specific needs. Senior leaders have the relevant professional training or experience, which is a valuable resource. Some chose their careers based on their experiences of volunteering at the scheme.

All volunteers are interviewed to ensure their suitability. The administration team undertakes meticulous recruitment checks. The registered manager oversees the recruitment process as part of his oversight and monitoring of the overall safety of the holiday.

The support of the school staff is an asset. The newly appointed headteacher drives the minibuses, and the catering staff ensure that the children and volunteers have nutritious meals, incorporating any specific allergies or dietary needs. Other school staff ensure that they are available during the scheme to support this valued part of the school community.

Parents appreciate the holiday and the opportunities offered to their children. A parent reported, 'It is the highlight of her year.' Another parent said, 'The experience is completely magical.'

The internal review of the scheme collates feedback from a range of sources and is reflective and constructively challenging to ensure continual improvement. There is a strong learning culture, which has contributed to the high-quality, safe care.

What does the residential holiday scheme for disabled children need to do to improve?

Recommendation

- The scheme's procedure should be in line with government guidance and requirements, including the duty to refer information to statutory bodies. This includes notifying Ofsted of the instigation and outcome of a child protection enquiry in relation to a child accommodated by the scheme. ('Residential holiday schemes for disabled children: national minimum standards', 13.3)

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 Residential Holiday Schemes for Disabled Children (England) Regulations 2013 and the national minimum standards.

Residential holiday scheme for disabled children details

Unique reference number: 2540028

Registered provider: The Saint John's School Foundation

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Inspector

Suzy Lemmy, Social Care Inspector

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