

# St John's School Community Holiday

The Saint John's School Foundation

Epsom Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8SP

Inspection 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 up to 25 children, aged 10-18 who may have learning and/or physical disabilities and/or sensory needs. 25 children were present during the inspection.

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

### Inspection dates: 12 to 20 August 2024

**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:** 21 August 2023

**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 organisation excels in its long-standing history of providing holidays to disabled children. Happiness and enthusiasm flow through each day. Fun is contagious and children flourish. Children benefit from a uniquely tailored holiday that is underpinned by high-quality care. Children spoke excitedly about the activities with swimming and the annual beach trip being a highlight of their week.

Senior volunteers with education or social care experience bring skills in alternative ways of communicating with children. A number of these volunteers are skilled at using Makaton and receive training in other communication aids, for example, emotion cards, and 'now and next' boards. A wide range of innovative pictorial information informs children throughout their holiday and beforehand. This enables children to have their voices heard and reduce any anxieties that they may have.

Children's time at the holiday is captured beautifully, and achievements are celebrated. Volunteers use a wide variety of media to ensure that children take home lasting memories. These include photos, videos and diaries. Some children highly value these memories, which help them to look forward to their holiday the following year.

Children can choose to take part in an extensive range of life-enhancing activities. Leaders and managers work creatively with partner agencies to maximise the range of activities available. This enables children to make and build friendships, enjoy new experiences, develop their confidence and independence skills. For example, children who have never been away from home gain confidence, learn to tie their shoelaces and fasten buttons. This has a positive impact on children's personal development and has enduring benefits for them.

Children experience a consistent sense of safety and security because at least one volunteer is allocated to each child throughout the day and night. Volunteers spend time exploring information about each individual child and encourage each child's participation meaningfully.

Children maintain good health during their holidays due to well managed medical arrangements. Excellent partnership working with parents ensures that children's medical needs are clearly identified and catered for. This outstanding medical care and the close partnership working with parents mean that children with very complex medical needs can access and enjoy the holiday experience safely. There are excellent processes for signing in, storing and administering medication. Specialist training is arranged for volunteers who support children with more complex needs, for example epilepsy and enteral feeding.

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

Families are completely confident that their children will be looked after and kept safe while on their holiday. The senior team of volunteers are extremely competent professionals with education, health and other relevant backgrounds.

Highly effective daily meetings with the senior volunteer team mean that information is regularly shared. Constant reflection is a strong theme which runs through this holiday scheme. When children are struggling with their anxieties, volunteers are skilful at changing and adapting activities. Consequently, children can choose to join activities when they want to and for the length of time that they can manage. This degree of flexibility to accommodate children's needs is exceptional practice.

Volunteers receive excellent safeguarding training in person and online. Their competency is checked through a safeguarding quiz. Together with a very detailed safeguarding policy, this means that vulnerable children who attend the holiday are kept safe. Posters that show the holiday scheme's safeguarding processes are visible in communal areas at the holiday scheme for all to use if they need to. There are also pictorial posters for children to understand what to do if they wanted to raise any concerns.

Younger volunteers are confident to raise safeguarding concerns. They know how to follow the holiday scheme procedures. When concerns are raised, leaders and managers ensure that robust action is taken to safeguard children. Detailed records of concerns are recorded and monitored by the registered manager of the holiday scheme.

The recruitment of volunteers is meticulous and robust. Only volunteers who have been through a thorough safer recruitment process can help on the holiday.

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

The registered manager is an inspirational leader who is respected by all. Leaders and volunteers are motivated, confident, and ambitious for children. The holiday operates because of the participation of around 60 volunteer helpers who are committed to their role. Leaders and managers have ensured that volunteers have returned to the holiday scheme year after year. Volunteers say that they do this because they 'love it'.

Leaders and managers are extremely committed and strive for all children to have an incredible holiday experience. This is achieved by the support of a senior team of volunteers who bring a wide variety of personal and professional experience, including expertise with children with disabilities.

A significant strength of the scheme is the proactive care planning which is undertaken prior to children attending the holiday. This means that very detailed information is gathered about children's favourite activities, their ways of

communicating, their healthcare, and potential challenges. This highly bespoke planning helps to reduce anxieties for children and their families, especially when children have not attended a holiday previously. One parent said, 'They have gone above and beyond in order to see that all steps have been taken to ensure that [name of child] will surely have a week to live long in the memory for them.'

Feedback from parents is exceptional. One parent said, 'We consider ourselves extremely fortunate to have finally secured a place this year and I must say everything from correspondence to planning has been exemplary. Nothing has been a problem.' Other parents said, 'It's a phenomenal holiday for my child', 'The holiday is a life changing event for us all' and, 'My daughter has never attended a residential holiday camp before. The communication has been outstanding.'

Throughout the holiday, leaders and managers are available to the senior volunteer team for advice and direction. They are fully involved in all aspects of decision making. This means that leaders and managers have a thorough overview of all aspects of the holiday scheme and seek feedback to continually improve the holiday for the following year.

Everyone involved with the management of this holiday scheme ensures that the aims in the statement of purpose are exceptionally well met. This is an excellent holiday scheme provided to children with disabilities. Children are safe, happy, appreciated, and are given enriching opportunities.

## **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

**Registered provider address:** Epsom Road, Leatherhead, Surrey KT22 8SP

**Responsible individual:** Leah Hilt

**Registered manager:** Neil Whitmore

**Telephone number:** 01372 373000

### **Inspector**

Hannah Cox, Social Care Inspector

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