

1247885

Registered provider: Carlisle Mencap Ltd

Interim inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is registered by a charitable organisation to provide care and accommodation under short-break arrangements for up to five children and young people. The home is registered for children and young people who may have learning disabilities and/or physical disabilities.

Inspection date: 7 March 2018

Judgement at last inspection: good

Date of last inspection: 19 April 2017

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

This inspection

The effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection

This home was judged good at the last full inspection.
At the interim inspection, Ofsted judges that it has improved effectiveness.

Following the change of registration from a local authority to a charitable organisation, this short-break service for children and young people who have learning and physical disabilities has gone from strength to strength. Children and young people continue to progress and have an extremely positive and enjoyable experience. The service has a long-established track record of providing a much-needed respite support service to the parents and carers of the children and young people.

One of many positive feedback comments from parents includes this: 'Thank you all for

the magical years you have given us, you will always be in our hearts. The years have gone so quickly and we have great memories of the fun times and the help you have given us; we will keep in touch and let you know how our son is over the coming years.'

The two requirements in relation to staff training and staff qualifications made at the last inspection have now been met. Training has been provided for and completed by all of the staff. This training covered child sexual exploitation, internet safety, drugs and alcohol, radicalisation and extremism. The staff clearly demonstrate their understanding of how to keep the children and young people safe. All staff have achieved the required qualification and the three new staff are enrolled on their level 3 course and are expected to complete this qualification within the regulatory timescale. This means that the children and young people receive a service from people who are qualified.

The staff numbers are sufficient and the staff provide the children and young people with a consistent level of care. Their experiences span from five years to 38 years, they fully understand the needs of the young people and they provide a high level of support to the children's and young people's families. The staff are child-focused and they use a range of highly skilled communication methods to enable the children and young people to make choices.

For example, the children and young people are able to choose which themed bedroom they wish to stay in for their short break and to bring personalised items from home, and the staff prepare the bedrooms before the children and young people arrive for their short break. The children and young people are also able to choose from a number of stimulating and fun activities, including sensory and ball-pool rooms, arts and crafts, toys, watching DVDs, and playing on the swing and trampoline in the garden.

Trips out in the specially adapted minibus are arranged to highly specialist, respite, residential and social facilities for children and young people who have complex disabilities and acute sensory impairments. The children's and young people's enjoyment is clear to see in the many photographs on the walls, illustrating the fun they have and the achievements they have made. One of the many thank you cards from parents and carers sent to the home reads, 'He will miss this service so much and all the special staff who took great care of him and all his special friends he made while he spent time there. I will forever be a grateful parent for all the care and love you showed us as a family.'

Since the last inspection, there has been a complete overhaul of the home's documentation, including care plans and risk assessments, which gives simplicity while retaining detail. Each care plan provides clarity on how to achieve the children's and young people's goals and objectives. Detailed and regular reviews indicate the progress that has been made towards these targets. Risk assessments specify how to prevent and reduce risks. The staff keep the paper records up to date, along with the electronic versions. This is useful not just for new staff, but also for other adults who are introduced to the children and young people, such as social workers and medical professionals. This reworking of the documentation means that duplication is reduced and the staff have a clear understanding of the care and support that the children and young people require.

The children and young people are safe, and the staff keep them safe. The staff team's excellent relationships with parents, carers and other professionals contribute effectively to their communication about and involvement in supporting the children's and young people's health, education, welfare concerns and risks. The staff team's vigilance and awareness of known risks protect the children and young people from going missing, child sexual exploitation and health and safety risks. This safeguards the children and young people from their vulnerabilities and keeps them safe. Individual behaviour management plans are consistent with the approaches taken when the children and young people are living with their families. Restraint is only used as a last resort to protect the children and young people from harming themselves or others.

A safe and secure social media website, dedicated only to the service and overseen by an administrator [the registered manager], provides up-to-date information for parents and carers. This allows them to share information with each other and the registered manager and staff in the home. There are many messages and much valuable updated information on this platform, all of which is gratefully received and used responsibly by those who have permission to access it.

Thorough decision-making about the children's and young people's compatibility with each other ensures that they are not distressed or disturbed. The children's and young people's needs are carefully considered, and when children and young people need higher staffing levels and a less busy environment, the registered manager reduces the number of children and young people staying, so that they have the closer care they need. Children's and young people's friendship groups have been formed, and short-break placements are in place for these groups to continue on a regular basis. The service continues to be managed effectively, offering a very good standard of short-break care. The home offers a calming environment, with staff preparing for the children and young people to arrive. On arrival following school, all children and young people were observed to be welcomed into the home, with the staff catering very well to their individual needs. The service continues to meet its aims: providing a safe, warm environment and welcoming atmosphere centred on the children's and young people's needs, as well as the needs of their families.

The home's statement of purpose has been revised and updated and provides valuable information about the services and the staff who are to provide these services to the children and young people and their families. However, the revised and updated statement of purpose has not been sent to Ofsted as required by regulation. This means that the regulator (Ofsted) has not been kept informed of the changes made within the service.

The internal monitoring systems in place review the quality of care that the children and young people receive and identify areas in which experiences for the children and young people may be improved. The management team's monitoring reflects an awareness of key issues and clearly identifies patterns and trends. Regular monthly visits by the independent person provide feedback about the service. This helps the registered manager and staff to identify strengths and weaknesses in the service.

The service has a clear path of combining the children’s and young people’s care, education and health needs and is striving to do even more. It is an extremely child-friendly place, focused on development and happiness. One child told the inspector, ‘I’m really happy here.’

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
19/04/2017	Full	Good

What does the children’s home need to do to improve?

Statutory requirement

This section sets out the actions that the registered person(s) must take to meet the Care Standards Act 2000, Children’s Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the ‘Guide to the children’s homes regulations including the quality standards’. The registered person(s) must comply within the given timescales.

Requirement	Due date
<p>16: Statement of purpose</p> <p>The registered person must compile in relation to the children’s home a statement (‘the statement of purpose’) which covers the matters listed in Schedule 1. The registered person must—</p> <p>(a) keep the statement of purpose under review and, where appropriate, revise it; and</p> <p>(b) notify HMCI of any revisions and send HMCI a copy of the revised statement within 28 days of the revision. (Regulation 16 (1)(3)(a)(b))</p>	31/03/2018

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives

of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

This inspection focused on the effectiveness of the home and the progress and experiences of children and young people since the most recent full inspection.

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 Children's Homes (England) Regulations 2015 and the 'Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards'.

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1247885

Provision sub-type: children's home

Registered provider: Carlisle Mencap Ltd

Registered provider address: Unit J3, Duchess Avenue, Kingmoor Park North, Carlisle CA6 4SN

Responsible individual: Sheila Gregory

Registered manager: Craig Scott

Inspector

Mark Kersh, social care inspector

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