

Heswall Disabled Children's Holiday Fund

Inspection report for residential holiday schemes for disabled children

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Inspector	Michelle Bacon
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Registered person	Heswall Disabled Children's Holiday Fund
Registered manager	Vincent Keating
Responsible individual	Andrew Powell
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Service information

Brief description of the service

The residential holiday scheme for disabled children is a voluntary and charitable trust. It provides a residential holiday for one week only during the summer holidays for children and young people with complex needs, including learning and physical disabilities and complex health needs. The scheme operates from a residential activity centre.

The inspection judgements:

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Inadequate

The overall experiences of children and young people

The overall experiences of children and young people is judged to be **Outstanding**

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Children and young people thoroughly enjoy their holiday. They get a real thrill from the variety of activities and experiences on offer, that they may otherwise not be able to access. These experiences enrich their lives and are providing enduring benefits for them, including improvements in individual skills, abilities and confidence. The activities are interesting, stimulating, exciting. They include arts and crafts, swimming, camp fire and barbeque, meals out, cinema trips. This year the children and young people experienced the exhilaration of going in and flying an aeroplane. Children said, this was the best thing about their holiday. A parent commented, 'we only take him to things that are positive learning experiences that broaden his horizons and this is a good experience.'

High quality and consistent care that is responsive to individual needs adds considerably to children and young people's experiences, progress and development. They enjoy extremely positive relationships with others attending the scheme and the helpers. The helpers are highly committed to ensuring all children and young people have an excellent holiday. They were observed singing, dancing and playing games with the children and young people. They are motivated, enthusiastic and fully embrace the opportunity to enable children and young people get the most from their holiday.

Care planning and practice is highly personalised to meet the individual needs of each child and young person. Leaders and managers develop strong links with parents, carers, social workers and health professionals to ensure they have a clear understanding of every child and young person's care needs. They are considerate to cultural and religious needs, including any dietary preferences. This promotes consistency of care for children and young people while they are away from home. Children and young people's right to inclusion and participation are central to the scheme. They are encouraged to share their views, wishes and feelings on all aspects of their holiday, including their care and making choices about which activities they want to do. One young person was supported to ring home to seek reassurance from his parents before going on an activity he was not sure about. This put him at ease and he was able to take part and enjoy the activity. Some staff are skilled in using alternative methods of communication, such as sign language. This enables them to communicate effectively with children and young people.

How well children and young people are helped and protected

The service is **Outstanding** at helping and protecting children and young people.

Children and young people feel safe. Excellent safeguarding practices ensure that vulnerable children and young people are safe from harm. Leaders and helpers fully understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to keeping children and young people safe so that their safety and welfare is not compromised. A number of the children and young people have limited mobility and communication; therefore, they are totally dependent on the helpers for their care needs. Helpers demonstrate a high level of competence when delivering intimate care practice. This ensures the dignity and privacy of children and young people are maintained all times. They all receive training in child protection and provide the children and young people with appropriate levels of supervision at all times. They are alert to potential risks, including bullying, but ensure safety measures do not overly restrict children and young people enjoying new experiences.

Children and young people benefit from comprehensive risk assessments. Effective strategies ensure they do not go missing. Leaders receive detailed information from parents and carers about their child's emotional, personal and health needs prior to their holiday. This gives them an excellent understanding of any specific needs and ensures children and young people are appropriately cared for. Arrangements for managing, administering and recording of medication are robust. Medically trained helpers take responsibility for the storage and dispensing of medication. Leaders have reviewed medication procedures so that non-prescribed medication is clearly recorded on a suitable medication administration record. Furthermore, when children arrive for the start of their holiday all medication is

checked with their parents. This ensures the correct medication is received and no medication is accepted that is not appropriately labelled or packaged.

Children and young people's behaviour is very good. Leaders and helpers work exceptionally well in promoting positive behaviour. Observations confirm that helpers are adept at recognising when children and young people are becoming upset and need additional support. They remain calm and offer lots of reassurance to prevent children and young people becoming too distressed. Leaders ensure good communication is maintained with parents should their child become upset or unwell. Parents and carers are also able to contact them should they be worried or have any concerns. One parent said, 'the staff are brilliant they've been very reassuring.' Another commented 'the lines of communication are excellent.' This promotes constructive relationships parents and carers.

The holiday takes place at a suitable location with facilities that take into account needs of disabled children and young people. It provides a safe and secure environment where children and young people's stay is relaxing, happy and most of all a fun experience.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

The effectiveness of leaders and managers is **Outstanding**

Leaders and managers are inspirational, confident and ambitious for children and young people. They are extremely influential in improving the lives of those who attend the scheme. They have high expectations of the helpers to provide children and young people with an excellent holiday that brings lasting benefits to them. They lead by example working alongside the helpers to ensure high quality care for all the children and young people. A parent commented on the 'tremendous amount of preparation for the camp.' Discussions about their child's needs were 'extremely thorough.' Relationships between leaders, managers and parents and partner agencies ensure children and young people receive the best possible care and experiences during their holiday.

The Statement of Purpose is clear so that parents, carers and stakeholders are clear about the aims and objectives of the scheme and the services and facilities it provides. Leaders and managers regularly monitor and evaluate the quality of the care provided. For example, at the end of each day they have a planning meeting to reflect on the day's event and identify any changes that maybe required. This enables the leaders to quickly remedy any shortfalls and take effective action. On the night before the flying activity the leaders were informed that a change in the weather could impact on the activity. Therefore they re-scheduled the day's events to ensure the children and young people did not miss out on this amazing opportunity. A trustee of the charity also visits the scheme to evaluate the quality of care and identify any areas for development. They have secured improvements

this year by supplying their own catering. This has not only proved to be cost effective for the charity, but more importantly they have been effective in meeting the specific dietary requirements for individual children and young people.

Leaders and managers ensure the recruitment and vetting of helpers is thorough and safe, so that children and young people are only looked after by suitable people. That said, the majority of helpers have volunteered for the charity for a number of years. This means that there are a sufficient number of skilled and experienced helpers to meet the diverse needs of the children and young people. The helpers confirmed they receive good supervision, support and training. Junior helpers do not support children and young people with their personal care, but are actively involved with the activities.

Leaders and managers have extensive knowledge of the local area and wider community. Their consistently proactive and creative work maximises the range of stimulating and enjoyable activities available to the children and young people. They consistently challenge any barriers to children and young people's participation within the community. This is central to developing essential life skills that enables them to socialise and have the same social opportunities as other children and young people.

Plans and records of children and young people's care and support are clear, up to date and stored securely. Records contribute to an understanding of children and young people's needs and how these are met during their stay.

Working in partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people

The effectiveness of leaders and managers is **Outstanding** at working in partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people

Highly effective, well-embedded and mutually challenging partnership arrangements bring enduring benefits to the children and young people attending the holiday scheme. The scheme's consistently proactive and creative work with partners has maximised the range of stimulating and enjoyable activities available to the children and young people.

Leaders, managers and helpers have established strong and extremely beneficial relationships with the children and young people, their parents and carers, education and health professionals. These relationships along with thorough pre-planning and assessment ensure that the staff and helpers can meet the individual needs of all the children and young people extremely well.

Leaders and managers have effective links with the local safeguarding agencies. That said there have not been any matters relating to safeguarding. Leaders and

managers actively encourage children, young people and their families to provide feedback on the holiday. This enables them to take positive action to secure future improvements. For example, one of the ways where they have identified that they could improve is by opening the scheme up to girls as well as boys. Consequently, the scheme continues to develop and generate creative ideas to sustain the highest quality care for children and young people.

About this inspection

The purpose of this inspection is to inform children and young people, parents, the public, local authorities and government of the quality and standard of the service provided. The inspection was carried out under the Care Standards Act 2000 to assess the effectiveness of the service and to consider how well it complies with the relevant regulations and meets the national minimum standards.

The report details the main strengths, any areas for improvement, including any breaches of regulation, and any failure to meet national minimum standards. The judgements included in the report are made against *Residential holiday schemes for disabled children: The inspection framework, evaluation schedule and grade descriptors*.