

SC446003

Registered provider: Carlisle Mencap Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is owned by a registered charitable organisation. It provides short breaks for up to four children and young people who have physical and/or learning disabilities. All placements are made under short-break arrangements. The manager of the centre has been registered with Ofsted since January 2018. The manager is working towards his level five qualification.

Inspection dates: 20 to 21 February 2020

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 children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 10 August 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: Good

Enforcement action since last inspection: None

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
10/08/2018	Full	Good
03/11/2017	Full	Good
23/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
13/12/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children make notable progress through spending short breaks at the centre. For example, one young person has learned to brush his teeth, one has improved speech and language and one has learned to feed herself with a spoon. Staff undertake activity-based work with children. This is linked to achievements and positive outcomes. One parent commented that her child had made significant progress in respect of his self-esteem as a direct result of his short-break stays. Another parent specifically commented on her child's improved independence. She attributed this to the opportunities for shopping and meal preparation that her child took part in during their stays.

Staff know the children well. Observations of staff and children together were positive. Parents report that their children look forward to their short-break stays. Children's care plans are highly individualised to children's unique needs. For example, one care plan noted that carrier bags were a trigger for a child's distress. Another noted that a child had a specific sensory need and that staff should not wash or dry her hair.

Children are carefully matched for their short-term stays. This results in children having opportunities to spend time positively with their peers and to develop friendships. Social workers spoken to as part of this inspection noted that a strength of the home was its detailed knowledge of individual children and their successful matching.

Children are encouraged to participate in a range of activities that they like to do or are interested in. Children are consulted about what they wish to do on arrival at the centre. On this inspection, the girls suggested a trip out to a local supermarket to select pizza for tea.

Parents feel that they are well informed and involved in their children's stays. Staff use the ClassDojo application to keep parents informed through communication feeds of their child's time in the centre. The home also puts on coffee mornings for parents to connect with the centre and to form links and support networks with other parents.

The home itself is being developed in a child-centred way. Externally, there are bat and bird nesting boxes and new bicycles. Internally, there is a dark tent, sensory room and sand and water trays. This, combined with a variety of external activities and outings, ensures that there is appropriate play and stimulation for all the children accessing the service.

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

Children are safe during their short breaks. Their eagerness and enthusiasm about coming to the centre evidences that they feel safe and secure there. Parents

reported that they were confident that staff had the skills to keep their children safe from harm.

The format for risk assessment has been improved. Short-break planning documents clearly illustrate the child's abilities and the areas where they require support. During discussion with staff, it was clear that they were familiar with the children in their care and understood what their safeguarding needs were.

There has been one medication error since the last full inspection. This has been addressed through staff supervision and team meetings. A new protocol has also been implemented where parents are contacted prior to their child's stay to check that medication information held by the home is current and that no changes have been made.

Regular fire drills are conducted. One child has recently refused to leave the centre during fire drills. The manager has taken advice from a variety of sources to address this issue and come up with a plan to help the child evacuate in a safe and timely manner. The child's care plan and risk assessment have been updated to include this new information.

The provider uses safer recruitment practices to ensure that all staff are safe and suitable to work with the vulnerable children who access this service.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The registered manager is child focused and passionate about providing high-quality care and support to the children who access the service. The manager understands the needs of the children and their families and provides care packages in line with those needs. Feedback from parents is consistently positive.

The manager is committed to giving children and parents a voice within the service. He has worked hard to improve communication with parents, and to ensure that children have choices and are involved in planning activities. He has also forged links to other similar services to share information and good practice.

Efficient monitoring systems are in place. This results in the manager having a good level of knowledge about the home's strengths and weaknesses. There is a clear development plan in place to continue to drive improvement and further develop the home's and staff's skills.

The staff team is stable which provides continuity of care for children. Staff report that they are supervised and supported in their roles. They also have access to all mandatory training and additional training which is specific to children's needs.

The home is currently only offering a limited service. This is due to low local authority commissioning levels and the reduced number of children accessing the service. The manager has ideas for diversifying while continuing to offer a service to the children and families who rely on it.

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

Statutory requirements

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>The registered person must make arrangements for the handling, recording, safekeeping, safe administration and disposal of medicines received into the children’s home.</p> <p>In particular the registered person must ensure that— medicine which is prescribed for a child is administered as prescribed to the child for whom it is prescribed and to no other child. (Regulation 23 (1)(2)(b))</p>	<p>03/04/2020</p>

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 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: SC446003

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Carlisle Mencap Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Sheila Gregory

Registered manager: Stuart Cowper

Inspector

Gillian Walters, Social Care Inspector

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