

# Oundle Mencap Holidays

Oundle Mencap Holidays Limited

Full inspection

Inspection under the social care common inspection framework

## Information about this residential holiday scheme for disabled children

This holiday scheme caters for up to 40 children with learning and physical disabilities.

The manager registered with Ofsted in May 2016.

### Inspection dates: 9 to 11 August 2022

**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:** 29 July 2019

**Overall judgement at last inspection:** outstanding

**Enforcement action since last inspection:** none

## Inspection judgement

### **Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding**

Families' comments about this holiday scheme include, 'My child absolutely loved it' and 'It is a highlight of the year!' During the holiday, children showed through their conversations and body language that they were having a wonderful time.

Leaders and managers aim to visit all children and families prior to 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.

Senior volunteers have excellent skills in communicating with all children. They can adapt styles of communication to ensure that this is always accessible to every child. For example, when some children struggle to understand that swimming has finished, volunteers use waterproof visual communication cues to help them to transition out of the swimming pool and on to the next activity. This outstanding practice means that children's anxieties around transitions are reduced.

Achievements are celebrated. Volunteers use a wide variety of media to ensure that children take home lasting memories. This includes photos, videos and diaries. Some children highly value these memories, which helps them to look forward to their holiday the following year.

The holiday scheme takes place on the premises of an independent boarding school. Accommodation is within two interlinked houses. The holiday scheme hires specialist equipment, when necessary, to meet children's care needs. Most children share a room with a volunteer, while other older children are encouraged to be more independent. All children have access to a range of fantastic facilities, including a newly built swimming pool, extensive outside grounds and a sensory room.

### **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 often extremely competent professionals from education, health and various other backgrounds. Senior volunteers with education or social care experience bring skills in alternative ways of communicating with disabled children. A number of these volunteers are skilled at using Makaton.

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 or behaviours, the

holiday scheme provides a very high degree of flexibility. Staff are adept at changing and modifying activities. This means that children can join activities however they want to, when they want to, and for the length of time they want to. This degree of flexibility to change to accommodate children is exceptional practice.

Volunteers receive excellent safeguarding training in person and online. Their competency is checked. Together with a very detailed safeguarding children policy, this means that vulnerable children who attend the holiday are kept safer. 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.

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 made. However, although records are made, these have not always been checked by a manager for accuracy. This shortfall does not impact on the excellent care that children receive.

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

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

Leaders and managers are extremely committed and ambitious for all children to have a fantastic 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.

The registered manager has continued to further develop links with the school where the holiday is based. A member of school staff is dedicating their time to ensure that there is a natural flow of new volunteers. These mutually beneficial arrangements mean that students are provided with work experience and children are cared for by enthusiastic young people.

When recommendations are set at inspections, leaders and managers ensure that these are addressed. Families and children now have enhanced opportunities to provide feedback about their holiday experience. Children can provide feedback through several mediums. One child wrote about an activity to a park in their diary and said that they 'loved it'. Also, leaders have produced an ambitious, although realistic, development plan. Furthermore, as the current registered manager is due to retire, robust planning is underway to create a smooth transition to the identified successor.

Leaders and managers have ensured that volunteers have returned to the holiday scheme year on year. Volunteers say that they do this because they love it. For some senior volunteers, their initial volunteering has sparked a keen interest in working with children with disabilities and set them off on a successful career path in this area.

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.

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

### **Recommendation**

- The registered person should ensure that entries in records are legible, clearly expressed, non-stigmatising, and distinguish between fact, opinion and third-party information. This specifically relates to some detail in safeguarding reports not being accurate. ('Residential holiday schemes for disabled children: national minimum standards', 15.4)

### **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:** 1159390

**Provision subtype** Holiday scheme for disabled children

**Registered provider:** Oundle Mencap Holidays Limited

**Registered provider address:** 58 Glapthorn Road, Oundle PE8 4PT

**Responsible individual:** Anna Clish

**Registered manager:** Catherine Taylor

### **Inspector**

Simon Hunter, Social Care Inspector

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