

Heswall Disabled Children's Holiday Fund

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9 Milton Road, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 4RE

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential holiday scheme for disabled children

Heswall Disabled Children's Holiday Fund is a charitable organisation that provides a summer holiday for disabled children and children with complex health needs and special educational needs. It provides a one-week holiday at a residential activity centre. It aims to provide a range of activities and experiences for disabled children who would not otherwise have a holiday.

The manager registered with Ofsted in November 2014.

In 2021, the organisation expanded its services by introducing a one-week holiday option for up to 30 children in both the South West and North West regions.

The inspector visited the children's holiday scheme in the South West. At the time of the inspection, 22 children were enjoying their holiday.

Inspection dates: 17 to 22 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 last inspection: 14 August 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children have lots of fun and enjoy the new experiences provided. They say how happy they are and show this in their reactions and relationships with their volunteers. One parent said:

'Although our daughter is non-verbal, we know that she is happy on the holiday. She starts squealing and laughing as soon as we go through the gates of the camp and is greeted by the volunteers who are going to look after her.'

The care plans for children are clear and detailed. Information is provided by parents, carers and other professionals. This includes each child's specific routines and areas where they need the most help, such as with medication, personal care or dietary needs. The plans are updated as required throughout the holiday. Therefore, all the volunteers, whether working one to one or as additional volunteers, know how to care for the child.

Children's health needs are identified with parents at the application stage and in all pre-holiday planning. They are extremely well met. There are clear and safe processes for storing and administering medication. Volunteers and senior leaders are trained to meet each child's health needs. This ensures that children remain healthy and safe while enjoying their holiday.

The children's individual ways of communicating are recognised and planned for. This includes volunteers receiving training in Makaton. Each child's needs are fully reflected in the volunteers' handbook, which also covers communication. Signs, posters and planners include symbols. This helps children to know what is happening next and to express their feelings. Volunteers have picture cards for those who do not communicate verbally. Therefore, children can tell volunteers how they are feeling and make choices.

There is an ethos around recognising and celebrating children's qualities and achievements. Volunteers constantly give children praise and encouragement. Children are rewarded for demonstrating good qualities, including friendship, resilience and teamwork. One child showed the inspector the medal he received at the scheme's 'medal time', which is a daily event. The child explained that he had been awarded the medal for being kind.

Children can choose to take part in a wide range of activities. This allows them to have new experiences and, most importantly, have fun. Areas are set up around the holiday site for children who want to do quieter activities. This includes a sensory room and spaces for drama, colouring and crafts. One parent said, 'Attending the camp helps my child to gain confidence and independence. He has made new friends and participated in new experiences.'

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

Children benefit from a robust application procedure, which ensures that volunteers receive accurate information about children's needs, wishes and preferences. This helps the registered manager to devise effective care plans that establish children's medical and communication needs and routines.

The holiday scheme's chef ensures that children's dietary needs are strictly met. This includes meals for children who have special dietary needs. Typically, this includes accounting for children's allergies, particular palates, pureed food consistencies and specified preferences.

The manager ensures that all incidents and accidents are well recorded. They are reviewed by the manager and safeguarding leads. When required, actions are identified to add to a child's plan. This is then shared with the volunteers. Therefore, all volunteers can reflect and learn from incidents and make any necessary changes to practice.

Leaders have carried out clear risk assessments for activities on and off site. All off-site venues have been visited before the holiday to assess potential risk. This is in addition to risks identified in children's plans. This helps volunteers to recognise and respond appropriately to risky situations.

Children benefit from being cared for by volunteers who are largely already known to them. Most volunteers have volunteered previously for several consecutive years. Therefore, they have a good understanding of individual children's methods of communication, behavioural patterns and medical needs. Children's care is highly personalised and tailored to meet their individual and diverse needs.

Children stay in a well-maintained, safe and pleasant environment. Leaders and managers make sure that the accommodation and facilities meet children's needs and enable them to maximise opportunities for safe independence. Sleeping arrangements are appropriate. Sleep-in and waking night volunteers are on shift to ensure that children are safe during the night. The kitchen and dining areas are well organised, safe and well equipped.

By matching volunteers with children based on compatible personalities and interests, and providing the necessary skills, the organisation ensures that children receive high-quality care. The trainer reinforced theoretical learning with practical training on the first day to meet a child's health needs. Parents also demonstrated daily routines to maintain consistency. This attention to detail defines a holiday scheme that truly puts children first.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

The leadership and management of the residential holiday scheme are strong and consistently effective. The registered manager has excellent experience, qualifications and skills to manage a residential holiday scheme for disabled children.

Experienced group leaders provide guidance and are positive role models for newer volunteers. As a result, the volunteers are extremely enthusiastic about their roles. The volunteers say that they look forward to the holiday every year and most return year after year.

The leadership team offers excellent training and support for volunteers, starting with comprehensive online sessions before the holiday. A review session the day before reinforces key points. Senior volunteers handling complex tasks, such as supporting children with epilepsy, receive specialised training. This thorough preparation ensures that volunteers have the knowledge and confidence to help children enjoy a safe and happy week.

The holiday scheme is meeting the aims and objectives outlined in the statement of purpose. No areas for improvement were noted at the last inspection and none are identified at this inspection. The leadership of the holiday scheme is characterised by high expectations and aspirations for all children. This is well evidenced in practice.

Children take home their artwork, certificates and rewards as memorabilia. Therefore, managers and staff contribute to children's experiences beyond the holiday scheme. Parents are also provided with an online link to access a catalogue of photos. This enables children to share their experiences and joy with their families, carers and friends.

Leaders and managers are committed to the further improvement of the holiday scheme. Managers ensure that monitoring systems are effective in highlighting the strengths and areas identified for improvement. Managers are proactive in seeking feedback from all stakeholders at the end of each camp session to help inform developments for future residential holiday schemes.

The senior management team is present throughout the holiday and maintains strong and effective oversight of the day-to-day running of the holiday. This approach results in the holiday programme being very organised. The service review is comprehensive and adheres to regulations. This has been provided to Ofsted for transparency and offers insight into the operational procedures of the scheme.

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: 1027082

Registered provider: Heswall Disabled Children's Holiday Fund

Registered provider address: 9 Milton Road, Waterloo, Liverpool L22 4RE

Responsible individual: Charlie Bough

Registered manager: Vincent Keating

Telephone number: 07989 745768

Email address: committee@heswallcamp.org.uk

Inspector

Jennifer Quest, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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