

1244280

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and run. It provides a therapeutic facility to meet the care needs for up to seven children who have social and/or emotional difficulties. In the same grounds there is another children's home and a school, both of which are separately registered and owned by the same provider.

There is a manager in post who registered with Ofsted in March 2018.

Inspection dates: 10 and 11 August 2022

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
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How well children and young people are helped and protected	good
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The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
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The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 29 March 2022

Overall judgement at last inspection: improved effectiveness

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
29/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness
15/06/2021	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/01/2020	Full	Good
12/03/2019	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are settled and happy at their home. They are developing positive routines and are improving their life chances and their personal and social skills. Children talk to staff about matters that are important to them. They feel confident that they are listened to. The strength of their relationship means that children respond well to the guidance and advice from staff.

Staff help children to be healthy. Children enjoy a balanced diet and attend routine medical appointments. The regular support from the clinical psychologist ensures that children have a safe space to talk about things that matter to them. This helps children to learn how to express their feelings. This means that children are better able to manage their own emotions appropriately.

Children's education is a priority. All of the children attend the on-site school and their attendance is good. The regular meetings between the staff, teachers and education staff ensure there is a coordinated approach to children's education. As a result, the educational outcomes for children are improving.

Children enjoy a range of activities with staff and each other. These include playing football and golf, visiting cinemas, having picnics and trips to the seaside. These opportunities help children to develop self-confidence and build positive relationships with staff. These relationships are long-lasting and continue to be a safety net for children when they move on. One child who has recently moved on and kept in touch with staff said, 'If it was up to me, I would have stayed.'

Children are supported to develop independence skills. They regularly engage in household tasks and contribute to house meetings and daily consultations. As a result, children begin to enhance their reflection and independence skills. For one child, this has been significant as they have developed an interest in sewing skills. They have made various clothing items for themselves, which they are very proud of. These skills help children to feel more confident about moving on from the home.

Staff help children to maintain relationships with friends and family. They facilitate safe and managed family time between children and their families. Staff understand family dynamics and build relationships with families. These help children to develop relationships that will sustain them into adulthood.

Children are supported to celebrate differences and develop their self-identity. They take part in events such as Pride Week, Macmillan coffee mornings and Eid celebrations. One child successfully completed a sponsored walk for charity. These activities help children to understand tolerance and diversity.

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

The manager carefully evaluates the risks of children living together through comprehensive matching assessments. This helps to ensure that children's progress is not hindered and that their welfare is prioritised.

Risk assessments are regularly updated. These documents are clear and easy to follow. This means that staff will be able to provide consistent care to the children. Children are involved in writing their own plans. This helps them to understand what the worries are.

Children complete a range of work individually and as a group. This work helps children to understand how to keep safe. The topics they cover include online safety, safety in the car and bullying. As a result, the children understand what is expected of them and learn to behave well.

Behaviour is well managed, with clear practical plans and strategies for staff. Staff avoid physical intervention if possible and it has only been used to keep children and others safe. All records of physical restraints are detailed and the manager has clear oversight of these records. There is support for both the child and staff concerned. This helps children and staff to reflect about ways to prevent such events happening again.

Safer recruitment processes are strong. The registered manager ensures that all relevant checks and verifications are complete before staff work with children. This helps to reduce the risk of harm to children.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is a positive role model for children and staff. She has high aspirations for children and staff and promotes this ethos in day-to-day practice. She is supported by a caring and committed team. This means that children are supported by a staff team whose members are motivated to help them achieve the best possible outcomes.

The staff said that they feel supported. Staff receive consistent and reflective supervision sessions that assist them in developing their skills and improving the care provided to children. They benefit from monthly meetings with the clinical team. These meetings enable staff to develop their practice and strategies to manage children's individual behaviours. This means that children are supported by a staff team whose members are confident to provide consistent care.

Staff access a wide variety of training specific to their role. They benefit from input from the clinical team, whose members deliver courses that support the therapeutic parenting that the home offers. This ensures that all staff are equipped to care for the children in the home effectively.

In the main, management monitoring systems are effective. The systems track all aspects of children's care. However, there were some instances where the manager was not aware that a significant number of key documents on children's files were not dated. This shortfall does not provide an accurate record of when children's records were evaluated.

On one occasion, the manager did not notify Ofsted of a serious incident regarding a child in a timely manner. This delay prevented Ofsted from making sure that the actions taken to protect children were carried out promptly.

Effective multi-agency working ensures that the needs of children remain at the centre of practice. Staff share information with parents and professionals, who provided consistently good feedback about the strong lines of communication with the home. This helps to effectively identify strategies to ensure that the children are safeguarded.

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
The registered person must maintain records ("case records") for each child which— are signed and dated by the author of each entry. (Regulation 36 (1)(c))	23 September 2022
The registered person must notify HMCI and each other relevant person without delay if— there is any other incident relating to a child which the registered person considers to be serious. (Regulation 40 (4)(e))	23 September 2022

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: 1244280

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Registered provider address: Witherslack Group, Lupton Tower, Lupton,
Carnforth LA6 2PR

Responsible individual: Graeme Cheyne

Registered manager: Michelle Hird

Inspectors

Evelyn Chafota, Social Care Inspector
Ruth Jackson, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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