

1244280

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and run. It provides care for up to seven children who have social and/or emotional difficulties.

The home was registered with Ofsted in November 2016, and the manager registered in March 2018.

At the time of this inspection, there were seven children living at the home.

The home is in the same grounds as another children's home and a school, both of which are separately registered and owned by the same provider and were not inspected at this inspection.

Inspection date: 11 December 2024

Date of last inspection: 28 August 2024

Judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At this inspection, the inspector evaluated:

- the care of children
- the safety of children
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers.

The inspector looked closely at the experiences and progress of children, using the social care common inspection framework. This assurance 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'.

Findings from the inspection

We did not identify any serious or widespread concerns in relation to the care or protection of children at this assurance inspection.

Children have good relationships with the staff who care for them. Staff invest time in children; they listen to them, protect them and promote their welfare. Children can name trusted adults they can speak to if they have any worries or concerns. One child said, 'They take very good care of me. I like it here because I feel safe.'

Staff support the children to attend school. All children have good attendance and are making progress in meeting their education targets. Staff work together with the school, clinical team and social workers to ensure that there is a wraparound approach to achieving the best outcomes for children. One social worker said, 'I can't praise them highly enough. They are amazing.'

Children who are new to the home have carefully planned moves and are welcomed sensitively. There is a robust referral process that is used to consider the needs of children moving into the home and those children who already live at the home and the impact of these on all children. This demonstrates a child-centred approach when considering whether new children should move into the home.

When it is necessary for children to leave the home, the manager considers what is in the best interest of all children living at the home in consultation with the child's placing authority.

Staff support children to spend time with their families in line with their agreed plans. They transport children to visit their families regardless of the distance. This ensures that children maintain relationships with the people who are important to them. Staff share information with children's family members and ensure that they are notified of key events.

When it is necessary to physically hold a child, it is reasonable and proportionate. The manager completes a detailed overview of the incident and speaks to the child and staff about the hold. All relevant professionals are notified.

There have been no occasions when children have been missing from the home since the last inspection. However, on one occasion, two children from the home went missing from school. Staff worked with school staff to search for the children. When they returned home, staff offered support to both children and showed professional curiosity to find out the reason the children had left the school without permission.

When children are involved in accidents, these are suitably recorded and have oversight from the manager. They include details of the first aid or medical support

provided. Accidents that have happened in school are also documented in the home. This ensures children's well-being is monitored across both settings.

Direct-work sessions are frequent and cover topics that are associated with the children's individual needs and vulnerabilities. In the main, this is conversational and takes place across the whole staff team. However, when needed, direct-work sessions are completed in response to significant events and are targeted on a specific topic.

Since the last inspection, the manager has implemented suitable systems for the internal monitoring of the home. This ensures that she has effective oversight of significant events and identifies strengths and areas for improvement.

There is a stable and consistent workforce who are suitably skilled, trained and qualified to meet the individual needs of the children in their care. Due to the consistency of the staff team, children are able to develop positive relationships with staff, which provides them with a sense of permanence, belonging and safety.

The recommendation raised at the previous inspection remains in place as no children have required a referral to health services since that time. Therefore, the provider is unable to demonstrate that the recommendation has been met, and so it is restated.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
28/08/2024	Full	Good
01/08/2023	Full	Good
10/08/2022	Full	Good
29/03/2022	Interim	Improved effectiveness

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

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that when children have identified health needs, they receive an appropriate service to help maintain their health and dignity. Referrals for services should take place in a timely way. (Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards' page 34, paragraph 7.11)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 1244280

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Registered provider address: Lupton Tower, Lupton, Carnforth, Lancashire LA6 2PR

Responsible individual: Richard Matthews

Registered manager: Michelle Hird

Inspector

Katie Tomlinson, Social Care Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2024