

1244280

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is privately owned and registered to provide care and accommodation for up to seven children and young people who have emotional and/or behavioural problems. In the same grounds there is another children's home and a school, both of which are separately registered and inspected under the same provider. All the young people attend this school.

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

Inspection dates: 12 to 13 March 2019

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: 27 November 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: inadequate

Enforcement action since last inspection: Three compliance notices and a restriction of accommodation notice were issued following the last full inspection. The restriction notice was rescinded after a monitoring inspection identified improvements. At the same time, the provider had complied with the steps in the three compliance notices.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
03/01/2019	Monitoring	Complied
27/11/2018	Full	Inadequate
17/07/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
04/04/2017	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- When a child returns to the home after being missing from care or away from the home without permission, the responsible authority must provide an opportunity for the child to have an independent return home interview. Homes should take account of information provided by such interviews when assessing risks and putting arrangements in place to protect each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 45, paragraph 9.30) In particular, sufficient records of the detail of return home interviews should be kept in the home to be able to take account of this information.
- Records of restraint must be kept and should enable the registered person and staff to review the use of control, discipline and restraint to identify effective practice and respond promptly where any issues or trends of concern emerge. The review should provide the opportunity for amending practice to ensure it meets the needs of each child. ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards', page 49, paragraph 9.59) In particular, the records must include the staff rationale for restraining a child.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

The children and young people make good progress in their lives. This is due to the quality of the relationships they have with staff and how well they are looked after. The children and young people are happy, feel listened to and think that the staff look after them well.

The home environment is warm and friendly. The bedrooms are personalised and reflect the individual personalities and interests of the children and young people. The communal areas are well kept and child-centred in design and furnishings.

The children and young people benefit from having good school attendance, which is significantly higher than they achieved before the last inspection. The care and teaching staff communicate about the children and young people's individual needs daily. These two groups of staff and the on-site clinical staff work together to support the children's and young people's emotional well-being. This, in turn, helps the children and young people to achieve in school.

The staff invest time and effort to build up rapport and positive relationships with the children and young people. The staff make the home a fun place and help the children and young people with their individual interests, such as dance, music, playing pool and participating in local youth clubs. The level of inclusion in the local community is positive

and creates further opportunities. For example, one young person has been invited on a residential trip.

The children and young people are trusting of the staff, who listen to their views and wishes. Consequently, the children and young people have a good say in the running of the home and influence decisions about family contact, activities, levels of free time, meals, the rewards system and having a mobile phone.

The staff balance a restorative practice approach with the children and young people alongside setting individual targets. This helps the children and young people to understand the consequences of their actions and achieve their personal goals. Consequently, the children and young people develop age-appropriate independence, improve their personal hygiene, enjoy activities out in the community, improve relationships and the amount of contact with relatives, and develop their confidence and self-esteem.

The children and young people are healthy. The staff encourage healthy lifestyles, including exercise and good diets. There are a very low number of incidents of smoking and drinking alcohol. Staff undertake direct work with children and young people to address the risks involved in such behaviours.

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

The children and young people feel safe. They have positive relationships with staff whom they know well. This helps the children and young people feel comfortable and secure and improves their emotional well-being.

The care of the children and young people is informed by clinical advice and is based on research and evidence-based models of child development and social work. The staff understand the needs of the children and young people and the reasons underlying their challenging behaviour. The staff respond appropriately to the children and young people.

The staff consistently reinforce boundaries and expectations that help the children and young people to follow normal day-to-day routines. These include getting up for school, good personal hygiene, appropriate diets and enjoying leisure activities. Consequently, the frequency of staff using physical intervention and the number of times the children and young people are missing from the home are both low.

The records kept of the use of physical interventions do not always account for the reasons staff thought it was justified to restrain a child or young person. Information from return home interviews is not consistently maintained in the home to inform missing person's action plans. The manager maintains a regular oversight of the safeguarding concerns and the incidents that happen in the home. This includes regular discussion with staff and social workers. Therefore, this mitigates any potential impact from the shortfalls in recording.

The risks to the children and young people's safety are identified and well managed.

Staff implement detailed risk assessments, which are regularly reviewed to address any changes. Varying the staffing levels, the children and young people's free time and their access to mobile phones are some of the ways that safety is promoted. The staff regularly talk to the children and young people about issues such as sexual health, safe relationships, aggression, exploitation and going missing from home. The risks to the children and young people reduce because of the staff team's efforts.

The manager ensures that positive links with the local police and local authority are maintained. The placing authorities are informed of concerns or changes to risk assessments. This partnership work ensures a coordinated multi-agency approach to keeping the children and young people free from harm.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably qualified and experienced. She has provided stable leadership to the staff team for over a year and this has recently been enhanced with the appointment of a new deputy manager. Apart from this, there has been no other change to the staff team. The children and young people are familiar with the staff as a result, and this helps provide them with stability.

The manager and staff are committed to supporting the children and young people to succeed. The staff team promotes diverse needs and reacts positively to the children and young people's wishes and feelings. Staff supervision helps the staff to reflect on their practice and maintain a positive, child-centred approach to care.

The staff attend a wide range of training, which covers relevant safeguarding topics, self-harm, loss, bereavement, trauma and attachment. The staff work as a cohesive team and have the skills and knowledge to care for the children and young people.

The manager and staff have a good understanding of progress that the children and young people make. There are regular meetings between the staff, the school and the clinical team. The levels of communication are good, concerns about the children and young people are promptly addressed and there are recording systems that track the progress of the children and young people.

The checks conducted by the manager, an independent visitor and by senior managers ensure that there is comprehensive monitoring of the quality of care and safeguarding arrangements. Two placing authorities have recently undertaken their own audits and are satisfied that the children and young people receive good standards of care. Feedback from the children and young people's social workers and reviewing officers is also positive.

The children and young people benefit from a multi-agency approach within the home. They are developing positive relationships with the mental health practitioner in school. In turn, this informs care planning strategies. They also benefit from the partnership work with placing authorities. For example, one placing authority is providing extra educational psychology support. This approach to care is helping to give the children and

young people the best all-round support.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people. Inspectors considered the quality of work and the differences made to the lives of children and young people. They watched how professional staff work with children and young people and each other and discussed the effectiveness of help and care provided. Wherever possible, they talked to children and young people and their families. In addition, the inspectors have tried to understand what the children's home knows about how well it is performing, how well it is doing and what difference it is making for the children and young people whom it is trying to help, protect and look after.

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 Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Howard Tennant

Registered manager: Michelle Hird

Inspector

Simon Morley, social care inspector

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