

1247559

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private organisation and provides therapeutic care for up to six children who may experience social and emotional difficulties.

The home registered with Ofsted in February 2017 and the manager registered in June 2021.

Six children were living at the home at the time of this inspection. The inspector spoke with five of the children.

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 March 2024

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	good
---	-------------

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

The effectiveness of leaders and managers	good
---	------

The children's home provides effective services that meet the requirements for good.

Date of last inspection: 7 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
07/03/2023	Full	Good
07/07/2021	Full	Good
29/10/2019	Full	Outstanding
22/02/2019	Interim	Sustained effectiveness

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children move into the home in a planned and positive way. The manager and staff provide children with individualised care. Children's plans are understood and followed by staff. This ensures that children receive consistent care.

Children make good progress with their education. They have significantly increased their educational attendance from their starting points and are engaging well. A head teacher of four of the children said, 'All are achieving really well and we are delighted with the progress they have made.' This demonstrates that children are encouraged and supported to reach their educational potential.

Informal learning opportunities are provided to the children. For example; children develop life skills, grow their own vegetables and donate these to the local food bank. They take part in a variety of activities and are encouraged to celebrate events and to get involved in their local community. This supports the children to develop their knowledge about the world and promote their interaction and social skills.

Staff prioritise children's health and well-being and encourage them to attend routine health appointments. Children regularly engage with the home's therapist; this ensures that children's emotional health and well-being needs are addressed.

Staff support children to see their family and friends. Staff have good relationships with children's family members and their friends' parents. This helps children to maintain relationships with the people who are important to them and maintain a sense of identity.

Children and staff share positive and caring relationships based on mutual respect. Staff ensure that they listen to the children's views, wishes and feelings, empowering them to make choices and participate in decisions about their care. An independent reviewing officer said, 'The home is a warm, therapeutic environment. The care that is provided is very positive, it is more of a family environment.' Children's photos are displayed in the home and their bedrooms are personalised. The home is decorated to a good standard and is free of hazards. Children have ample space inside and outside of the home to play. Children live in a happy and relaxed home where staff treat them with dignity and respect.

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

The manager and staff have a good understanding and knowledge of the children's risks and vulnerabilities. They follow robust risk management plans that include clear guidance on the actions for the staff to take to keep children safe.

Staff are trained in issues such as child exploitation, online safety, self-harm, and missing from home. This supports staff to manage the children's risks and vulnerabilities effectively. Safeguarding incidents and allegations are managed well. The manager takes appropriate action and communicates effectively with other professionals to ensure that children are safe living in the home.

On occasions, staff have had to physically hold two children. Staff prioritise techniques to verbally de-escalate situations and only use physical intervention as a last resort where necessary and proportionate to keep everyone safe. The manager evaluates and has good oversight of physical interventions.

Children have been missing from care on a number of occasions. Staff are proactive in their approach to try to locate children and work with the police to return children home safely in line with protocols. Independent return home interviews are generally offered to children, if not the management team take swift action to follow this up with the placing authority. Staff speak to children when they return home to try to identify triggers, so that appropriate strategies can be put in place to reduce the risk.

Two children have been given consequences to help support them to change their behaviours. However, the manager does not always ensure that the staff are spoken to, to reflect on the consequence, its effectiveness and whether it is considered to be restorative in nature.

Most children spoken to said that they felt safe living in the home and that staff help them to stay safe. One child shared that they would score the home 9.5 out of 10 and that they love the space in the home and their bedroom. They feel they get on well with all of the staff, the child said, 'They are sound.'

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager is suitably experienced and has a relevant childcare and management qualification. Children, professionals, staff, and parents talk fondly of the manager. A social worker said, 'The manager has such a lovely manner with the children, hats off to him, he just has a lovely nice inclusive way and he is fair as well. I have a right lovely feel about the home, but most importantly [name of child] has a good feel about it.'

There is a stable staff team in place. This means that the children receive consistent care from staff that they know and trust. Team meetings and child focused meetings take place regularly. The manager, staff and therapist discuss the children and reflect on practice. The management team share findings from research with the staff. This supports the development of the staff team to ensure that they provide good quality care that meets children's needs.

The manager and staff receive regular supervision in line with the statement of purpose. They use this time well to reflect on their practice and the needs of the children. Staff say that they feel valued and supported by the management team.

One member of staff said, 'I feel really welcomed and supported. Managers operate an open door policy and I feel I can talk to them and approach them. You are massively valued; it doesn't go a miss when we are thanked for our work.'

Staff have their practice annually appraised. However, appraisals do not consider feedback from professionals working alongside the member of staff or the children living in the home. This is a missed opportunity for the manager and member of staff to further reflect on their practice.

Leaders and managers have effective monitoring and review systems in place. This helps the manager to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the service and the care that staff provide to the children to ensure that swift action is taken to address any shortfalls as they arise. However, the manager does not gather feedback from parents, family members or significant others to develop the service and to support the evaluation and development of the care provided to the children.

The recommendations raised at the last inspection have been met.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that they seek feedback from children's parents, family members and significant others to develop care planning and to support evaluation and development of the care provided to the children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 22, paragraph 4.6)
- The registered person should ensure that any consequence used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature. Also; to ensure that the person giving the consequence is spoken to in timescales to reflect on the effectiveness of the consequence. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 47, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person should ensure that appraisals of staff performance take into account, where reasonable and practical, the views of other professionals who have worked with the staff member over the year and of children in the home's care. ('Guide to the Children's Home Regulations, including the quality standards', page 61, paragraph 13.5)

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: 1247559

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Mark Jarvill

Registered manager: David Beavers

Inspector

Julie Elder, 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 looked after children, 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://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>.

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