

1263199

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The children's home is registered to provide care and accommodation to six young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Inspection dates: 11 to 12 June 2019

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: 11 September 2018

Overall judgement at last inspection: good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
11/09/2018	Full	Good
20/03/2018	Full	Good

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

Recommendations

- Registered persons must ensure that procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying are in place and staff have the skills required to intervene, protect and address bullying behaviours effectively ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards' page 39, paragraph 8.16).
In particular, individual and group work sessions should be strengthened to address this more effectively.
- Any sanctions used to address poor behaviour should be restorative in nature, to help children recognise the impact of their behaviour on themselves, other children, the staff caring for them and the wider community ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards' page 46, paragraph 9.38)
- The registered person should ensure that staff can access appropriate facilities and resources to support their training needs and should understand the key role they play in the training and development of staff in the home ('Guide to the children's homes regulations including the quality standards' page 53, paragraph 10.11)

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Young people are making good progress. They are growing in confidence and have developed strong and positive relationships with the staff team. Young people enjoy spending time with staff both at home and in the community.

The home is spacious and decorated to a good standard. The environment is homely, and young people are nurtured by the staff team. Young people are being encouraged to make memories and to capture special times. An independent reviewing officer said, 'The change in [young person's name]'s presentation over the initial three-month period was remarkable. I believe the staff team [has] been successful in engaging and developing a positive, nurturing relationship with them.'

Young people are learning new skills that will prepare them for adult life, such as cooking and budgeting. Young people are also supporting each other. For example, one young person has taught another to swim. Staff have supported one young person to have and look after a pet. This has helped him to develop a sense of responsibility as he cares for it well.

All young people attend schools managed by the organisation. Staff understand the importance of education, and young people attend school every day. One young person

spoke of his aspirations to gain employment when he leaves school. A parent said, 'His confidence has grown so much since he has been there. He now goes to school every day and he used to refuse point blank before.'

There is good communication between home and school staff, and this means that consistent approaches and boundaries are maintained.

All young people have access to a therapist employed by the organisation. Young people engage well with this. One young person has identified anger management as an area that he would like to work on with the therapist. This has helped him to manage his emotions better.

Some young people live a long way from their families. Staff support young people to keep in touch and to travel to them regularly. This has helped them to maintain relationships with their extended families. One independent reviewing officer said, 'The [staff in the] home are effective advocates for [young person's name], in particular in relation to family time, which is very important to him. The home effectively works with family and actively facilitates and manages contact.'

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

Staff understand young people's risks and vulnerabilities. Risk assessments are comprehensive and kept under review. This means that staff understand the strategies that they must use to keep young people safe. For example, contact arrangements are well planned and safely supervised when this is necessary.

Staff provide young people with support, advice and guidance to help keep himself safe. Staff are encouraging and support the older young people to spend free time in the local community safely. This is preparing him for independence. A parent said, 'It's great. I have no worries about him. I know that they are keeping him safe.'

Staff have made a positive impact in reducing the risk of young people going missing from care. Robust arrangements are in place, and each young person has a detailed missing from care profile. This means that staff can respond quickly and effectively.

Staff listen to young people. Dedicated time is set aside at bedtimes to talk about their day and anything that may be worrying them. This has given young people a sense of security and helped them to manage their emotions better.

There is a mix of age ranges, and sometimes this causes tension and incidents of challenging behaviour between the young people. Sometimes staff have found relationships between the young people difficult to manage, and problems persist. Incidents are responded to quickly, and staff are trying to encourage positive behaviours and relationships. They understand potential trigger points and have introduced strategies such as staggered home times to address this. There has been a decrease in the need to use physical interventions.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

An experienced manager leads this home. She has a clear vision for the home's progression and is well supported by senior management. The manager is child centred and has high expectations for what the young people can achieve. The manager takes appropriate steps to challenge other professionals and escalates issues appropriately to ensure that young people receive high-quality services.

There are effective monitoring systems in place, and this means that the manager understands the home's strengths and areas for development. Young people's progress against targets is monitored regularly. This means that the support they receive is more effective and focused.

The staff team is stable, and there is high staff retention. This means that young people can develop relationships with staff over time. A parent said, 'I think they are fantastic, very helpful. Our [young person's name] loves it there. The staff go way above and beyond. You couldn't ask for more.'

The manager has given staff members additional responsibilities to lead and develop practice in the home in areas such as transition to adulthood and community participation projects.

Staff receive regular supervision and appraisals. There are regular team meetings that focus on the needs of the young people. Specialist training in areas such as child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation and managing contact sessions has been sourced for staff. Additional training is required to support the staff team's understanding of the impact of young people's additional needs, for example attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

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: 1263199

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Marcella Bird

Registered manager: Lisa Shoosmith

Inspector

Sophie Thomson, 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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