

2594902

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is operated by a private national provider. It provides care for up to five children. At the time of this inspection, five children were living in the home.

The provider operates a school on the same site as the children's home. Only the children's home was inspected at this time.

The home does not currently have a registered manager. A manager has been recruited and is due to commence employment on 13 March 2023.

Inspection date: 1 March 2023

Date of last inspection: 14 June 2022

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be 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.

Inspectors have 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.

The care of children

Staff encourage and support children to eat healthily and make healthy lifestyle choices. High-sugar and high-fat snacks have been replaced with fruit and healthier options. Staff are aware of children's health needs and support them well.

School attendance, while sporadic for some children, has improved. Staff encourage children to establish good routines that enable them to get up and go to school. All children attended school on the day of the inspection.

Staff challenge children's behaviour to help them be respectful to others. Children's behaviour on returning from school was energetic but polite.

The safety of children

There has been an improvement in how carers respond during incidents when children's emotions are heightened. This has led to a reduction in the intensity of these events. Other children in the home are less likely to become involved in or witness incidents. However, there have been a significant number of restraints used in the home. These have been used predominantly to manage one child's behaviour. Opportunities to de-escalate swiftly have not always been taken, and this has led to the child being restrained multiple times in one incident. During the inspection, managers decided they would review these incidents as part of a team learning process.

The home applies a blanket approach to the use of door alarms to monitor children at night. This means that all children are monitored, despite some not having behaviours that warrant this. Unnecessary restrictive practices are not acceptable.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers

Leaders and managers have responded effectively to the requirement made during the last inspection.

The registered manager at the time of the inspection no longer works at the home. A new manager has been appointed and is due to commence their role on the 13 March 2023. The staff team has been well supported by a deputy manager and senior managers. Oversight of the care children receive has improved. Records viewed by the inspector were accurate, and there was evidence of clear monitoring by managers. Staff receive regular and appropriate supervision that supports their well-being and development.

The progress of children is now being effectively tracked, and there is a plan for this to play a greater part in understanding the children's needs and the triggers for their behaviour. There is evidence that children have made progress since the last inspection.

Leaders have established a cohesive team of permanent staff that have potential to provide consistency for the team. The staff team reports being well supported and well trained. Concerns about staff practices have been appropriately referred to safeguarding agencies. Staff whose practice did not reach the standard expected have been subject to development plans or disciplinary procedures.

There has been learning around case recording. However, staff continue to use institutional language such as 'change of face' and 'money in hand'. These phrases are repeated by children in the home.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
14/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/02/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

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 may only use devices for the monitoring or surveillance of children if— the monitoring or surveillance is for the purpose of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child concerned, or other children; and the monitoring or surveillance is no more intrusive than necessary, having regard to the child's need for privacy. (Regulation 24 (1)(a)(d))	01 May 2023

Recommendation

- The registered person should ensure that all incidents of restraint are reviewed thoroughly to ensure that their use is fair and help staff to understand the child's triggers. Children should be involved in behaviour management so that they can voice what ways help them to calm most effectively. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 46, paragraph 9.36)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2594902

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Leigh Bown

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Penelope Kutz, 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 2023