

2594902

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is part of a national organisation. The home provides care for up to five children with emotional and social difficulties. At the time of this inspection, five children were living in the home.

The manager registered with Ofsted on 4 December 2023.

This home is on the same site as a school and two other children's homes which are all part of the same organisation. The inspector only inspected the social care provision of this home on this site. The other two children's homes on the same site were not part of this inspection

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 May 2024

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: 20 September 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
20/09/2023	Full	Requires improvement to be good
14/06/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good
15/02/2022	Full	Requires improvement to be good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children are well supported to have trusting relationships with the adults who care for them. Staff talk to the children about a range of sensitive issues and take time to understand the uniqueness of each child. Secure relationships have developed that support the children effectively in making progress at this home, including those children who have recently moved in.

Staff understand children's individual needs and plans are child-focused. Staff work hard to improve children's health and well-being. For example, staff devised a bespoke package of care to support one child's individual healthcare needs, and this has yielded positive outcomes for them.

A positive culture about education and learning is embedded and has a positive impact on children. Education is provided by an on-site school and staff from the home work closely with the teachers and learning assistants. Local businesses are invited into the home to offer careers advice and children are able to go on site visits to learn more about future job opportunities and apprenticeships.

Children say that they feel safe in their home and want to stay, with one child saying that they want to remain in the local area when they are adults. Staff are committed to ensuring that children enjoy regular, meaningful time with their family. When this is not possible, staff work with other professionals to help the child understand their life story. One relative talked about how 'happy and settled' their child is and how much they 'liked the staff'.

The environment is warm and welcoming, and the children's personalities shine through in the decor. It is a clean environment and provides a safe base from which children can grow. Children's bedrooms are individually decorated and furnished to carefully consider the children's wishes. One child's bedroom has an exercise bike, and another bedroom has a sofa and LED lighting.

Children are regularly consulted and involved in decisions about the development of the home. Children are encouraged to put forward suggestions for activities and as a result of one child's idea, during the week of the inspection all of the children were going on a trip to a theme park. Children are able to access independent advocacy if they want to.

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

Safeguarding concerns are well managed. Action taken to address any issues is robust and timely. Changes to care plans or risk assessments are made in consultation with the network of professionals involved with each child. There has been a significant reduction in any incidents, with no children going missing and only one safeguarding incident.

Staff understand the risks that using the internet poses for children. Staff have proportionate restrictions in place to help keep children safe, taking into account age and any known risks. Staff support children to learn how they can keep themselves safe.

Restraint is used at times to safeguard children from harming themselves or others. Records do not thoroughly describe the incident or de-escalation techniques used by staff prior to the restraint. Managers have sufficient oversight of the incident reports and lessons learned but this has not prevented future similar incidents occurring.

Staff support children to take age-appropriate risks as part of their development and learn skills to help keep themselves safe. Children enjoy spending meaningful time with their friends and family in the community without any unnecessary restrictions. One child talked about their time away from the home and how this is progressing to include using public transport and increasing periods of time away.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The home is managed effectively and efficiently by a caring manager. Children are included in many aspects of the home's development. The manager uses learning from incidents to inform staff practice. However, this is an area for further development as although learning has started, positive changes are not yet embedded.

Staff report that they enjoy their role, and they are trained, supported and receive formal and informal supervision. Staff are clear on the management structure within the organisation. Staff know the children well, spoke with passion about their unique roles and were able to explain clearly how they carry out bespoke work to improve the lives of the children.

The home is adequately staffed to care for the children in home. Managers have well-considered plans for filling vacancies when they arise. Managers follow a robust safe recruitment process and new staff receive comprehensive training over a six-month probation period.

The staff benefits from regular team meetings and reflective practice that is child-focused and led by clinical specialists. Staff discuss individual approaches in supporting children to manage their emotions and behaviours and actions are followed up by managers. Children are supported to understand their behaviours and develop strategies to manage their emotions.

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, The 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 positive relationships standard is that children are helped to develop, and to benefit from, relationships based on— an understanding about acceptable behaviour. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to ensure— that staff— de-escalate confrontations with or between children, or potentially violent behaviour by children. (Regulation 11 (1)(a) (2)(a)(xi)) This specifically relates to the registered person ensuring that lesson learned following incidents inform future staff practice.	26 August 2024

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: 2594902

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Neil Hedges

Registered manager: Sophie Stephenson

Inspectors

Gary Turney, Social Care Inspector
Stacey Pellow, Social Care Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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