

2709816

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Assurance inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is owned by a large private company. It is registered to provide care for up to 5 children with complex needs who may also experience a range of social and emotional difficulties. There is a school and two other homes on the same site which were not part of this inspection.

The registered manager has been in post since the home opened in January 2023.

There are 5 children living in the home, of which 4 spoke with the inspector.

Inspection date: 25 March 2026

Date of last inspection: 18 November 2025

Judgement at last inspection: requires improvement to be good

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Information about this inspection

At these inspections, 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.

Children are settled and making good progress across many aspects of their lives. Since the last inspection, one child has moved into the home, and none have left. Children say they are happy living in the home and have people they can talk to if they have any concerns.

Staff understand the importance of education. All children attend the school on site and have excellent attendance. Staff work collaboratively with their educational colleagues to ensure important information is shared. This enables additional support to be put in place when needed, helping children to achieve.

Staff help children to maintain positive relationships with people that are important to them. Many of the children live long distances from their families. Staff support children to regularly connect with their families and enjoy positive experiences with them. These positive experiences help children to feel they belong and, for one child, to move towards reunification with their family.

Children enjoy opportunities to participate in activities and new experiences that enhance their wellbeing and allow them to have fun. Staff ask children about activities they would like to participate in, and act on that information. Children make progress within their chosen hobbies and interest. This gives children a sense of achievement and increases their confidence.

Children are supported by a stable and experienced staff team. There is a low turnover of staff. The registered manager and staff are qualified or are undertaking the relevant qualification for working in children's residential care. Staff receive training opportunities, including regular sessions with therapists that enhances their knowledge in caring for children. This provides children with consistency of care from staff who have received the necessary training.

The home environment is decorated and furnished to a high standard. Children are proud of their rooms, which are personalised and contain items in line with their specific interests, age and understanding. However, there are some areas of the home that feel institutionalised and detract from an otherwise homely environment.

Children have well established routines and boundaries and are settled living in the home. There have been no incidents of children going missing or concerns raised by children since the last inspection. Physical intervention is used to support children who are in crisis. There has been a significant reduction in the number of incidents involving physical intervention in the last three months, indicating that children feel more secure and settled in their surroundings.

Leaders and managers do not provide effective oversight when incidents involving physical intervention have occurred. There is a lack of professional curiosity as to the actions taken by staff and whether this may have escalated incidents. For example, when incidents have gone on for long periods or when restraint has taken place in children's bedrooms. This is a lost opportunity for staff to reflect on how they have managed incidents and whether there is any learning identified to help improve the quality of care children receive.

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
18/11/2025	Full	Requires Improvement to be good
12/11/2024	Full	Good
12/07/2023	Full	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, 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 leadership and management standard is that the registered person enables, inspires and leads a culture in relation to the children's home that— helps children aspire to fulfil their potential; and promotes their welfare. In particular, the standard in paragraph (1) requires the registered person to— lead and manage the home in a way that is consistent with the approach and ethos, and delivers the outcomes, set out in the home's statement of purpose; ensure that staff have the experience, qualifications and skills to meet the needs of each child; understand the impact that the quality of care provided in the home is having on the progress and experiences of each child and use this understanding to inform the development of the quality of care provided in the home; demonstrate that practice in the home is informed and improved by taking into account and acting on— research and developments in relation to the ways in which the needs of children are best met; and feedback on the experiences of children, including complaints received; and use monitoring and review systems to make continuous improvements in the quality of care provided in the home. (Regulation 13 (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(c)(f)(g)(i)(ii)(h))	10 May 2026

In particular, the registered person must apply effective professional curiosity of staff actions during incidents involving children in the home. Staff must be given the opportunity to reflect on their actions and learn from them.	
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Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that the home is a nurturing and supportive environment that meets children's needs. In particular, they should ensure that there is a clear and appropriate rationale for the use of restrictors on windows and for restricting children's access to areas within the home. This should be kept under regular review. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 15, paragraph 3.9)

Children's home details

Unique reference number: 2709816

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Jill Firth

Registered manager: Jodie Whitehouse

Inspector

Louise Naylor, Social Care Inspector

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