

SC475706

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

The home is run by a private organisation and is registered for the care and accommodation of up to seven children who have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. There is no registered manager in post at present.

Inspection dates: 6 to 7 November 2018

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account	outstanding
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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 highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the children's home contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

Date of last inspection: 12 December 2017

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Enforcement action since last inspection: none

Recent inspection history

Inspection date	Inspection type	Inspection judgement
12/12/2017	Full	Outstanding
08/03/2017	Interim	Sustained effectiveness
05/10/2016	Full	Outstanding
22/01/2016	Full	Good

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

The home has been settled in the period since the previous inspection. One young person has moved on from the home and one child has been admitted. The previous registered manager has left, and the deputy manager has been promoted to be the manager.

All the children and young people continue to make very good progress, and many are making exceptional progress. This has been sustained throughout the inspection period. The combination of high-quality care, therapy and education at the on-site learning centre has provided the children and young people with excellent support and many opportunities. Practice within the home is informed by research, and staff are both innovative and tenacious. The staff have very good relationships with the children and young people, and have created a warm, relaxed and homely environment.

All of the children and young people are making good progress at school, and one or two have done particularly well. One young person has moved on to a college placement and others are involved in work experience outside of the school.

The provider has a team of therapists who work with the children and young people and also advise staff. Much of this work is excellent and effective. It is clear that the therapist's assessment is being put into action in everyday situations and is informing education practice. A great deal of individualised work is carried out with children and young people, and this also is directly informed by the therapist's assessments.

Many of the children and young people have been supported to have better contact with their families. Some have restarted relationships that had broken down and others have improved the level of contact. One young person is moving on shortly to live with a family member, which is an excellent outcome. Another child has re-established contact with a family member, and this has helped tremendously in discovering their cultural identity.

Another strength of the home is that the children and young people are encouraged to live full and active lives by taking up a wide range of activities and interests. These activities help to build confidence and resilience. A large number of celebrations and fun events take place in the home, for example 'Master chef' competitions, fancy-dress parties and charity events. The children and young people have a full say in all these arrangements. This is excellent practice.

External professionals spoken to by the inspector said that the work was 'fantastic', 'marvellous' and 'wonderful'. They said that children's and young people's progress was 'massive', and one said that a child had 'changed completely'.

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

The staff understand risks and make good risk assessments. They also put appropriate controls in place to minimise these risks. The staff offer good levels of supervision to the children and young people, and this helps not only to keep them safe but also to build relationships.

The staff offer very clear boundaries and expectations to the children and young people. Routine and structure are important, yet are balanced with nurturing and high-quality care. When there is some challenging behaviour, staff offer restorative work so that the children and young people understand what has happened and understand the consequences. Much of the restorative work is carried out in the form of individual interventions which comprise relevant direct-work sessions or sometimes group work.

There have only been a few missing from home incidents throughout the inspection period. Some very good safeguarding work has been carried out with all the children and young people by the staff, and this has undoubtedly helped to keep them safe.

There have been a few safeguarding incidents. Staff have dealt with these well and there have been no formal consequences. Staff have carried out some good restorative work with the children and young people concerned. One of these incidents is still being investigated by the police and is therefore not concluded. The inspector has taken account of this concern.

One incident was in relation to the administration of the incorrect dose of a medication to a young person. Staff responded quickly, and the young person was not harmed. To prevent a recurrence, appropriate training action was taken by the manager with all the staff.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The previous registered manager left at the end of July 2018. The existing deputy was appointed as manager. This change was well planned and organised, and provided for a seamless transition.

The new manager has considerable experience and has applied to be the registered manager. He has already brought in some new practices and wants to continue to develop the service. One recent change by the manager is the introduction of a work scheme. This will involve the children and young people taking on some responsibilities in the home and having a greater say in its running. This promotes independence skills, helps the children and young people feel a greater sense of belonging and also provides them with a little extra pocket money.

The staff spoken to by the inspector confirm that the manager is approachable and supportive and ensures that they have good-quality supervision and training. There is a comprehensive training package in place and all staff receive good levels of training. The communication between the on-site learning staff, the therapy team and the care

team is excellent. The manager ensures that there are regular meetings to discuss the children and young people. He also ensures that placement plans are closely informed by all the professionals working with the children and young people.

The manager also has good contact with a range of external professionals and services. External mental health services have been commissioned when required, and other specialist assessments and work are bought in when appropriate. He has good contact with placing authorities and will challenge them when necessary.

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 difference 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: SC475706

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Ltd

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

Responsible individual: Marcia McLoughlin

Registered manager: Post vacant

Inspector

Colin Imrie, social care inspector

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