

1159763

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

Full inspection

Inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this children's home

This home is operated by a private provider. It provides care for up to 8 children who may experience social and emotional difficulties. At the time of the inspection, 8 children were living in the home and all of them were spoken with.

The registered manager has been in post since May 2025.

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 May 2026

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: 19 August 2025

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
19/08/2025	Full	Requires improvement to be good
29/10/2024	Full	Good
06/03/2024	Full	Good
30/12/2022	Full	Good

Summary of findings

Children say they are happy living in the home. Positive relationships between children, staff and managers are evident. Children attend school every day, which is excellent progress from their starting points.

There is an experienced manager in place, who has a clear plan for the development of the home and staff team.

Leaders and managers know the children well. They are committed to helping children to make ongoing progress and continue to improve the quality of care provided.

Staff understand risks for individual children well and respond appropriately when children are in need of support.

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: good

Children have positive relationships with staff and say that they would not change anything about the care they receive. Children recognise the skills that staff use to help them when they are upset. They say that staff are good at calming them down when they are in crisis and making sure they are OK afterwards. Positive relationships with staff help children to make steady progress from their individual starting points.

Children develop positive relationships with each other and regularly take part in activities together, such as playing football or movie nights. There is lots of space inside and outside the home for children to play or to spend time on their own when they need to. A new play area has recently been built, which promotes playfulness and encourages children to spend time outdoors.

External professionals and partner agencies provide consistently positive feedback about the care and support provided for children. Multi-agency working helps children to make progress with their education. One child is now described as being the first one in school, the last one out, and doing well socially and academically. Communication between staff and other professionals is consistently good.

Staff support the children with family time and advocate for this. This ensures that children remain in contact with people who are important to them, helping them to feel safe and connected and build resilience.

Children and staff benefit from the therapeutic support of a clinical team. When children arrive at the home, there is an assessment from the clinical team and a post-assessment report to inform next steps. This helps staff to explore and understand the needs of the children and provide the right support. There are regular child-focused meetings, and

children feel able to engage in this support, helping them to understand their journeys and histories prior to moving into the home.

Staff understand the needs of the children well and how to support them. Staff see the progress that children are making and are proud of their achievements. The views of the children are important. Children are included in decisions about what meals they would like, what activities they take part in and decorating their bedrooms. This helps children to feel valued and to continue with the progress they are making.

One child has recently moved into the home, and this was well planned for. Effective multi-agency working helped the child to settle into the home quickly, and they have made excellent progress in a short period of time. Staff have helped children to settle quickly into the home by encouraging them to take part in thoughtful and meaningful activities, such as helping one child to bake a cake for a family member. This demonstrates to children that staff value their relationships with people who are important to them.

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

Staff have a good understanding of children's individual needs. Risk assessments are updated regularly and in line with any emerging risks. These inform behaviour support plans, and staff working in line with children's plans ensures that children continue to receive appropriate levels of care and support to keep them safe.

When children need to be restrained, this is done in the least restrictive way. Children are spoken to afterwards to seek their views, and they are given support and reassurance. Incidents are well managed by staff, who use a range of de-escalation techniques to help children calm before they need to use physical interventions. Managers' reviews of incidents are reflective and include input from the clinical team, ensuring that children's wellbeing remains a focus.

Detailed and descriptive plans are in place for children's care. Plans identify reasons for children's behaviour, providing clear and informed strategies to support children. Staff have used theory and research to produce an overview and analysis of one child's needs, identifying changes in behaviour and a reduction of interventions.

Staff have a good understanding of the impact of outside influences on children. In particular, they consider how family time can sometimes be challenging for children and how this affects children's emotional wellbeing. Staff have identified effective strategies to make transitions easier for children. Transitions for children are now more positive and adapted to their individual needs.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: good

The manager has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the care provided and is committed to improving the lives of the children living in the home. She

has worked hard to address the previous shortfalls in the quality of care provided for children and provides appropriate support but also challenge to staff where necessary. Staff say they are confident in the manager's ability to meet the needs of children.

The manager is present and visible around the home and shows genuine warmth and care for the children and the staff team. Staff say that she is a strong and supportive manager who offers a good level of support. The manager has high aspirations for the children in the home to do well and for the development of the staff team. The manager has built positive relationships with the wider network of professionals supporting the children and their family members.

The manager is working towards building a stable and committed team following a period of instability for staff and children. She is actively involved in the recruitment process to ensure that the right people with the right skills to meet the needs of the children are employed. When there have been staff shortages, the manager has completed shifts in the home, which has allowed her to spend time with children, building positive relationships.

The manager has good oversight of children's care and an in-depth knowledge of their needs. Management oversight of incidents is analytical, which helps to identify where staff practice can be improved. The manager has a nurturing and trauma-informed approach to children's care, which is becoming embedded in the staff's approach to caring for children. In particular, there has been some improvement in language used to write about children. The manager understands that how children are spoken about influences their views about themselves and how they are viewed by others. While there has been progress made in this regard, this continues to be a work in progress.

On one occasion, the manager's six-monthly report on the quality of care provided for children was sent out of timescales to Ofsted. However, this was due to the provider moving over to a new electronic system. Managers and leaders have acknowledged this shortfall and have taken steps to prevent this from happening again.

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

Recommendations

- The registered person should ensure that staff record information on individual children in a non-stigmatising way that distinguishes between fact, opinion and third-party information. Information about the child must always be recorded in a way that will be helpful to the child. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 62, paragraph 14.4)
- The registered person should ensure that a report reviewing the quality of care provided by the home is sent to Ofsted at least once every 6 months under Regulation 45, to ensure continuous improvement in the care of children. ('Guide to the Children's Homes Regulations, including the quality standards', page 65, paragraph 15.3)

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: 1159763

Provision sub-type: Children's home

Registered provider: Witherslack Group Limited

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

Responsible individual: Tracy Nicholson

Registered manager: Danielle Cunningham

Inspectors

Sarah Adotey, Social Care Inspector

Shaun Martin, Social Care Inspector

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